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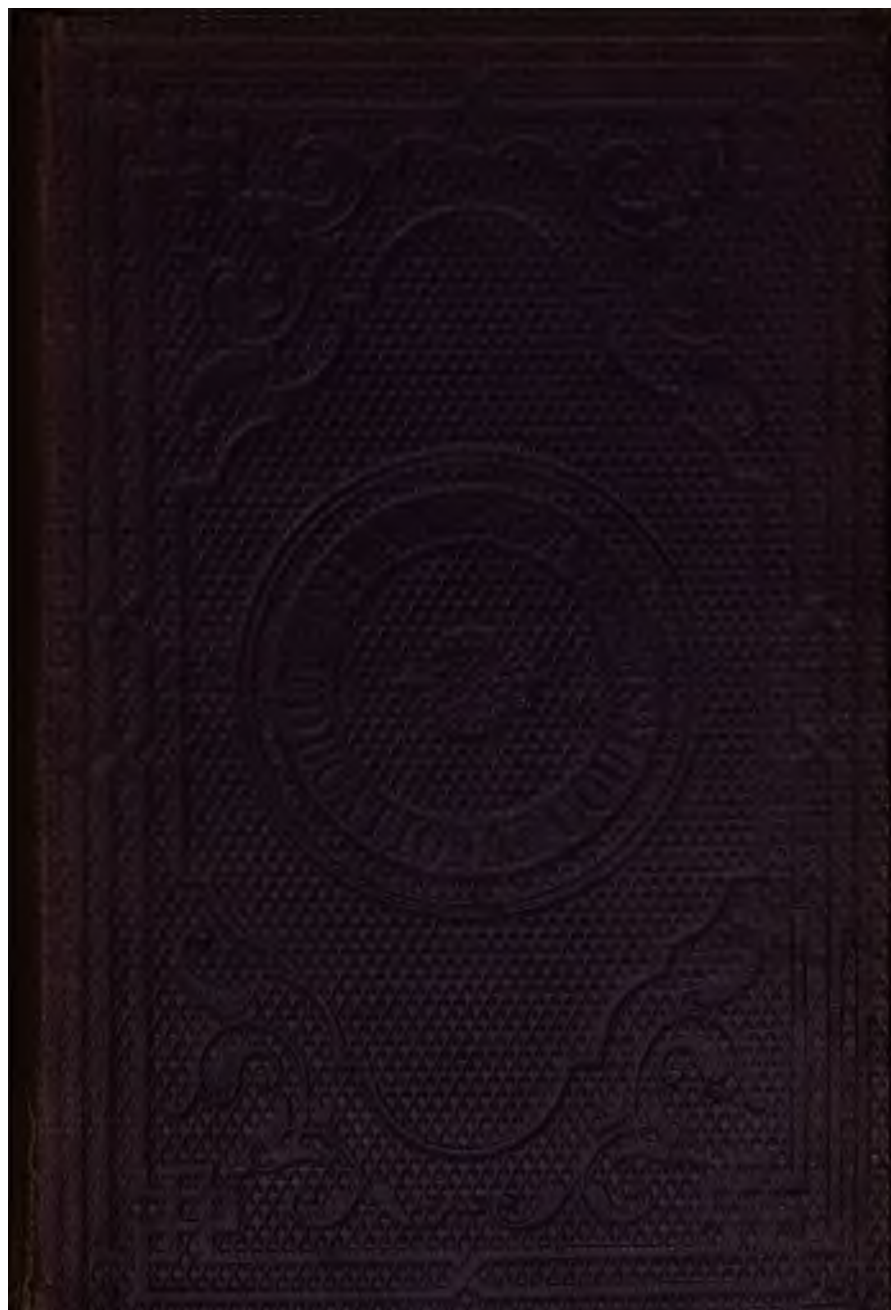
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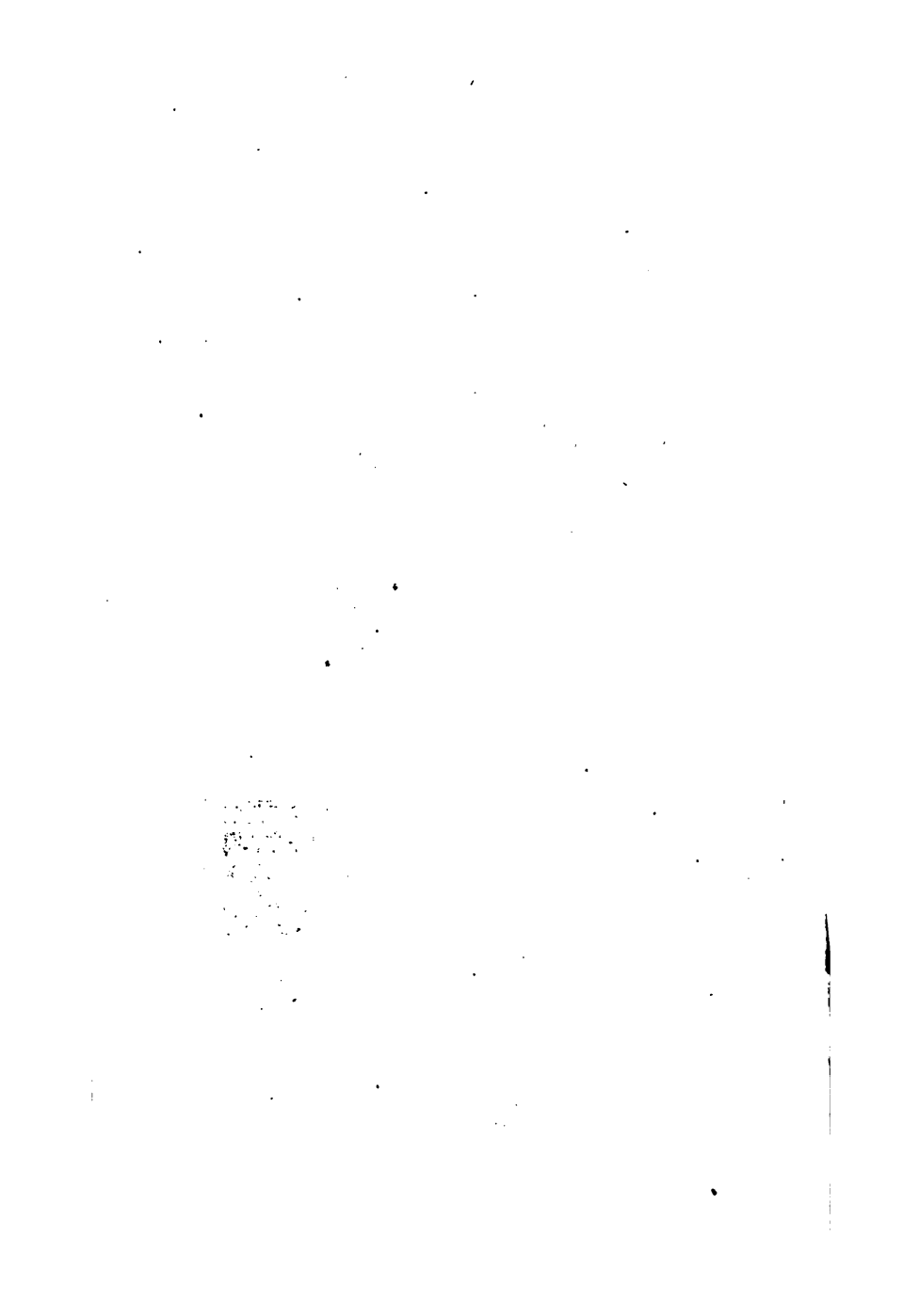
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OF THE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
AND  
LITERATURE.



WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS,  
LONDON AND EDINBURGH  
1861.

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## NOTICE.

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THIS volume belongs to that department of Chambers's Educational Course which is designed to communicate to young persons the rudiments of useful knowledge. It will be suitable to the more advanced classes in English academies, and serve as a text-book for those lectures on English literature, which are now given in so many institutions for mechanics and others. From its pages, an active teacher in any part of the country may easily form a series of such lectures, little else being necessary than to add to the specimens of progressive literature from the numerous sources at his command. It is further presumed, that such a work cannot fail to be useful to many besides young persons at school,—to all, in short, whose minds have been awakened to a desire of knowledge ; guiding them to the stores of English literature, and distinguishing for them those works which are most worthy of their attention.

Being, however humble in object, or limited in extent, the only History of English Literature which has as yet been given to the world, this volume was necessarily the result of considerable labour. Very great pains have

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been taken to ensure correctness in matters of fact, particularly in dates, which are so rarely given accurately in similar compilations. It may be mentioned that for a few of the critical opinions, besides those quoted, the author has been indebted to other writers, whose names, however, from a reluctance to multiply notes, he was induced to omit.



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## ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

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### FIRST PERIOD.

FROM THE EARLIEST TIME TILL THE YEAR 1400.

THE first language known to have been spoken in the British Islands, was one which is now totally unknown in England, but still exists, in various slightly altered shapes, in Wales, in the Highlands of Scotland, and in many parts of Ireland. This language is usually called, in reference to England, the British tongue; in reference to Scotland, the Gaelic; and in reference to Ireland, the Irish. It was originally the language of a large body of people called the Celts, who, several centuries before the Christian era, occupied all the western parts of Europe, but are now to be traced only in the Welsh, the Scottish Highlanders, the Irish, and a few tribes scattered along the western shores of France and Spain. A great number of names of places, both in England and in the Lowlands of Scotland, and many of the designations of natural objects, such as hills and rivers, are borrowed from this language, but we do not derive from it many of the words in our common speech.

In the fifth century, a people called Saxons, from Lower Germany, landed in the country now named England, and soon drove the original inhabitants into the western and northern parts of the island, where their

descendants and language have ever since been found. In the course of time, nearly the whole island south of the Firths of Forth and Solway was overspread by Saxons, whose posterity to this day forms the bulk of the people of that part of our country. From a leading branch of the Saxons, called Angles, the country took the name of England, while the new language was denominated, from them, the Anglo-Saxon.

This language was a branch of the Teutonic,—that is, the language of the Teutones, a nation which occupied a large portion of central Europe at the same time that the Celts overspread the west. The Danes, the Dutch, the Germans, and the English, are all considered as nations chiefly of Teutonic origin ; and their various languages bear, accordingly, a strong general resemblance.

From the sixth till the eleventh century, the Anglo-Saxon continued with little change to be the language of England. It only received accessions, during that time, from the Latin, which was brought in by Christian missionaries, and from the Danish, a kindred dialect of the Teutonic, which was introduced by the large hosts from Denmark, who endeavoured to effect settlements in England. At this period, literature was not neglected by the Anglo-Saxons. Their first known writer was *Gildas*, a historian, who flourished about the year 560. Another called *Bede*, a priest, who lived in the eighth century, was celebrated over all Europe for his learning and his literary productions. But the majority of the writers of that age thought it necessary to compose their works in Latin, as it was only by that means they could make themselves intelligible to the learned of other countries, who were almost their only readers. The earliest existing specimen of composition in the Saxon tongue is a fragment by *Cædmon*, a monk of Whitby, who wrote religious poetry in a very sublime strain, in the eighth century, and who, for want of learning, was obliged to employ his own language. *King Alfred*, in the ninth century, employed himself in translating various works into Saxon, for the use of the people ;

and some progress seems soon after to have been made in the art of composing poetry in the common language. Yet these branches of literature were generally held in contempt in those days ; and even for purposes of ordinary intercourse, the Anglo-Saxon became in time unfashionable. About the tenth century, the English gentry used to send their children to be educated in France, in order that they might acquire what was thought a more polite kind of speech.

In the year 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, (a part of France,) invaded and conquered Saxon England ; and as the country was immediately parcelled out amongst the officers of the victorious army, Norman-French thenceforward became the language of the upper ranks, while Saxon remained only as the speech of the peasantry. In the course of time, these two languages melted into each other, and became the basis of the present English language, though it may be remarked that the Saxon is still chiefly employed to express our homelier and more familiar ideas.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, while this process was going on, several writers used the popular language in the composition of rhyming chronicles, which, however, did not possess the least merit, either as poems or as histories. About the end of that period, when the French had become nearly identified with the Saxon, there arose a series of poets, who composed long romantic tales, in a manner which had been first practised by the bards of Provence, (the south of France,) who are otherwise known by the appellation of Troubadours ; and the singing of these stories, to the melody of the harp, in the presence of persons of rank, became at the same time the employment of a famous set of men called MINSTRELS, some of whom were also poets. But the best part of the intellect of the country, was still employed in learned compositions in Latin.\*

\* In order to convey at least, to the eye of the reader, a notion of the language employed by the people of England



The minstrel-poems, though in many respects absurd, were improvements upon the dull chronicles of the preceding age. While they gave a picture of past events scarcely less true, they were more graceful in composition, and possessed something like the spirit of modern poetry. They were generally founded upon the adventures of some real hero, such as Charlemagne or Roland, whose example was held up to imitation as the perfection of human conduct. Nor were the great men of antiquity neglected

soon after the Norman conquest, the following extract from a poem of that age may be given, with a translation into modern English :—

Tha the masse wes isungen,  
Of chirocken heo thrungen.  
The king mid his folke  
To his mete verda,  
And mucle his dugethe :  
Drem wes on hirede.  
Tha quene, an other halve,  
Hire hereberewe isohte :  
Heo hafde of wif-monne  
Wunder and moni an.

That is :—‘ When the mass was sung, out of the church they thronged. The king, amid his folk, to his meat fared, and many of his nobility : Joy was in the household. The queen on the other side, sought her harbour, (or apartment ;) she had wonderfully many women.’

The language which prevailed at the time when the Saxon and French were becoming one, may be exemplified by a verse from a poem on the death of Edward I. ; an event which took place in the year 1307 :—

Jerusalem, thou hast ilore \*  
The flour of all chivalerie,  
Nou Kyng Edward liveth na more,  
Aha ! that he yet shulde deye !  
He wolde ha rered up ful hayge †  
Our baners that bueth broht to ground ;  
Wel longe we mowe clefe ‡ and crie,  
Er we such a kyng hav yfounde !

\* Lost. Edward had intended to go on a crusade to the Holy Land.

† High.

‡ Call.

by these bards. Alexander of Macedonia was a great favourite with them ; and they would even resort to Grecian mythology for the subject of their lays. Theirs was a style of poetry highly suitable to the age in which they flourished—an age in which the spirit of military enterprise, fomented by religious enthusiasm, and a fantastic devotion to the fair sex, produced the system called Chivalry, and led to those gallant but unfortunate expeditions, the Crusades, which had for their object the rescue of the Holy Land from the dominion of the Saracens. A considerable number of the productions of the minstrels have been handed down in manuscript to modern times ; and their manner of writing has been in some measure revived by Sir Walter Scott, and several other authors of the present age.

The Provençal poetry produced a greater or less effect in almost all civilized countries. In Italy, during the early part of the fourteenth century, it awakened the genius of Dante and Petrarch, who were the first to produce the sentimental and systematic poetry which has ever since been so considerable a department of European literature. Dante wrote chiefly in an allegorical style ; that is to say, he described all kinds of abstract ideas under the semblance of things real and tangible. Petrarch, on the other hand, wrote amatory poetry with wonderful delicacy. There was another Italian writer, Boccaccio, who flourished a little later, and composed a series of entertaining stories in prose, which bears the general title of the Decameron. It is necessary to observe these things carefully, for English poetry was, in its origin, greatly affected by them.

Contemporary with Petrarch, and not long after the time of Dante, arose GEOFFREY CHAUCER, who is allowed to be the father of genuine English poetry. He flourished at the courts of Edward III. and Richard II., between the years 1360 and 1400, and not only possessed an original genius of the first order, but had improved himself by travel, and by all the learning of the times. Despising alike the dull old rhyming chro-

nielers, and the more lively minstrels, he aimed at writing after the regular manner of the three illustrious Italians just mentioned, taking allegory from Dante, tenderness from Petrarch, and humorous anecdote from Boccaccio. He was himself a shrewd observer of character and manners, and seems to have been well acquainted with the world, such as it was in his own time. His chief work is that called the *Canterbury Tales*, which consists of a series of sportive and pathetic narratives, related by a miscellaneous company in the course of a religious pilgrimage to Canterbury. The work opens with a description of the company setting out from the Tabard Inn in Southwark, and a minute account of the persons and the characters of the various pilgrims, who are nearly thirty in number. These characteristic sketches are in themselves allowed to display uncommon talent, so distinct is every one from the other, and so vividly are all presented to the mind of the reader. The Knight, the Yeoman, the Prioress, the Monk, the Merchant, the Lawyer, the Miller—all are exact and recognisable portraits.\*

\* As a specimen of the verse of Chaucer, in its original appearance, his description of the Miller may be here presented :

The Miller was a stout carl for the nones,  
 Ful big he was of braun and eke of bones :  
 That proved wel, for over all ther he came,  
 At wrestling he wolde bere away the ram.  
 He was short-shoulder'd, brode, a thikke gnarre,  
 Ther n'as no dore that he n'olde heve of barre,  
 Or breke it at a renning with his hede.  
 His berd as any sowe or fox was rede,  
 And thereto brode as though it were a spade ;  
 Upon the cop right of his nose he hade  
 A wert, and thereon stude a tuft of heres  
 Rede as the bristles of a sowes eres.  
 His nose-thirles blacke wer and wide :  
 A sword and bokeler bare he by his side :  
 His mouth as wide was as a forneis :  
 Wel coulde he stolen corne and tollen thries ;  
 And yet he hade a thoom of golde parde,  
 A white cote and a blew hode wared he :

The tales told by the Canterbury pilgrims, are partly humorous stories of humble life, partly romantic tales of chivalry, and only a few of them are supposed to have been altogether the invention of the poet. The general idea of the work was undoubtedly taken from the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, which consists of a hundred tales, narrated like those of Chaucer, by a company assembled by accident. Chaucer wrote many other poems, some of which were narrative and descriptive, while others were allegorical. He is held, notwithstanding the obscurity which time has brought over his works, to rank with

A baggepipe wel coulde he blow and sounen,  
And therewithal he brought us out of tounen.

It is unfortunate for the fame of Chaucer, and still more so for his countrymen, that his obsolete words, and old mode of spelling, render his poems very difficult to be understood. Several attempts have been made, with greater or less success, to modernize them in such a manner as to renew their popularity; the latest was by Mr Charles Cowden Clarke, in a work entitled the *Riches of Chaucer*, (2 vols. London, 1835,) which presents all that is truly excellent of this old poet, in the spelling of the present day, excepting where the original orthography is necessary to help out the measure. As a specimen of the pathos of Chaucer, in Mr Clarke's edition, may be given the dying words of Arcite, in which the very structure of the verse may be said to aid in the effect; its breaks and changes seeming to represent, as a critic has remarked, the sighs and sobbings of a broken and ebbing spirit:

Alas the woe ! alas the paines strong,  
That I for you have suffered, and so long !  
Alas the death ! alas mine Emily !  
Alas departing of our company !  
Alas mine heart's queen ! alas my wife !  
Mine heart's lady, ender of my life !  
What is this world ?—what asken men to have ?  
Now with his love, now in his cold grave—  
Alone,—withouten any company.  
Farewell my sweet,—farewell mine Emily !  
And soft take me in your armes tway  
For love of God, and hearkeneth what I say.

Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, and the other English poets of the first class.

Contemporary with Chaucer was JOHN GOWER, who wrote moral poetry of considerable merit. The same age produced the two first writers of English prose, SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE, a celebrated traveller, and JOHN WICLIFFE, who distinguished himself by his attempts to reform religion. Mandeville travelled for thirty-four years preceding 1356, in Eastern countries, and on his return wrote in English, French, and Latin, an account of all he had seen, mixed up with innumerable fables, derived from preceding writers and from hearsay. Wicliffe, who was a learned ecclesiastic, and professor of divinity in Baliol College, Oxford, began about the year 1377 to write both in Latin and English against the power of the Pope, and the various observances of the Catholic church; from his doing this long before general attention was directed to the subject, he has been called 'the Morning Star of the Reformation.' Among his voluminous writings, was a translation of the Bible into English, which, however, was not the first that had been executed. As a specimen of the prose of this period, a passage from his New Testament is quoted below.\*

Chaucer must also be considered as one of the prose writers of this age; he wrote, in that manner, a philosophical and meditative work called the *Testament of Love*, and two of the *Canterbury Tales* are in prose. The English language was now beginning to be considered as sufficiently polite for literary purposes, and was everywhere rising in estimation. From the Conquest till this time, French had been the language of education,

\* This Moisis ledde hem out, and dide woundris and signes in the lond of Egipte, and in the Reed See, and in Desert, fourti gheeris. This is Moisis that seide to the sones of Israel, God schal reise to ghou a prophete of ghoure britheren; as me ghe schulen heere him. This it is that was in the chirche in wildirnesse with the aungel that spak to him in the Mount Syna, and with oure fadris, which took wordis of lyf to ghyne to us.



and when Latin was translated in the schools, it was not translated into English, but into French. But now the schoolmasters began to acknowledge the existence of English, and to construe Latin into it. The King (Edward III.) also abolished the use of French in the public acts and judicial proceedings, and substituted English in its stead. This English, however, as already mentioned, contained many French words, which had been gradually adopted from the Norman gentry.

The language at this time used in the lowland districts of Scotland was chiefly of Teutonic origin, partly through the Saxons who had spread northward, and partly through Danish settlers and others from the north of Europe, who had taken possession of the eastern coasts. Except in its having a slighter mixture of Norman, the Scotch at this time very much resembled the English, and continued to do so till a comparatively recent period. As literary ideas and modes usually rose in the south of Europe, and went northward, England naturally became the medium through which these were communicated to Scotland, and the latter country was of course a little later in exhibiting native writers of all the various orders. Thus the time of Chaucer and of genuine poetry in England, was that in which Scotland first produced rhyming chroniclers; while the minstrels were a little later still. The first of the Scottish chroniclers was JOHN BARBOUR, archdeacon in the cathedral of Aberdeen, and a man of considerable learning. He, about the year 1371, composed a long poem in eight-syllabled measure, commemorating the adventures of King Robert Bruce. Though this work must for general reasons be classed with the chronicles, it is allowed to possess no small share of the spirit of contemporary English poetry; it describes incidents with a graphic force far above the character of a chronicle, and abounds in beautiful episodes and fine sentimental passages. Hence we may assume that, though Barbour bestowed his attention upon a form of composition now beginning to be antiquated in England, he partook nevertheless of the improved style

which Chaucer had adopted, and was capable of producing poems of the same general nature. His apostrophe to freedom, which occurs at the close of a description of the miserable slavery to which Scotland had been reduced by Edward of England, has always been admired for its spirit and tenderness ; \* and many other passages equally worthy of notice, could be pointed out.

About the year 1420, ANDREW WYNTOWN, prior of St Serf's Monastery in Lochleven, wrote a chronicle of universal history, particularly detailing that of Scotland, but with a very small infusion of poetical spirit. This work may be considered as closing the list of the rhyming chronicles. A little before the time of Wyntown, we find Scottish poets devoting their attention to the minstrel class of compositions, which had also for some time gone out of fashion in the southern part of the island. Among their productions of this kind may be mentioned the *Gest of Arthur*, by HUCHEON, a poem now lost—and *Sir Gawain*, by CLERK of Tranent, which has been preserved and printed, but appears as a very uncouth composition. The last poem of this kind seems to have been that entitled the *Adventures of Sir William Wallace*, composed about the year 1460, by a wandering minstrel named BLIND HARRY, and which presented the general outlines of the history of that hero,

\* A ! fredome is a nobill thing !  
 Fredome makes man to have liking !  
 Fredome all solace to man gives,  
 He lives at ese that frely lives !  
 A nobill heart may have nane ese,  
 Na ellys nocht that may him plese,  
 Giff fredom faileth ; for fre liking  
 Is yearnyt our all other thing.  
 Na he, that ay has levit free,  
 May nocht knaw weil the propyrtie,  
 The angry, na the wretchyt dome.  
 That is couplyt to foule thirldome.  
 But giff he had assayit it,  
 Than all perquer he suld it wyt ;  
 And sulde think fredome mair to pryse,  
 Than all the gold in warld that is.

mixed up with traditionary anecdotes, and aided in part by imagination. This poem, like that of Barbour, contains some passages of great poetical effect, and no small portion of patriotic and heroical sentiment. It differs from the generality of minstrel poems, in its bearing the appearance of an unaffected narration, and in its metre, which is of the kind called epic—that is, a series of rhymed couplets, in lines of ten syllables each. The work of Blind Harry was reduced into modern popular verse, about a century ago, by Mr Hamilton of Gilbertfield, and in that shape has ever since been a favourite book with the country people of Scotland.

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## SECOND PERIOD.

FROM 1400 TO 1558.

WHILE such minds as Chaucer's take shape, in some measure, from the state of learning and civilisation which may prevail in their time, it is very clear that they are never altogether created or brought into exercise by such circumstances. The rise of such men is accidental, and whole ages may pass without producing them. From the death of Chaucer in 1400, nearly two hundred years elapsed in England, before any poet comparable to him arose, and yet those two centuries were more enlightened than the times of Chaucer. He has on this account been likened to 'a genial day in an English spring,' which is frequently followed by very gloomy weather. This long period, however, produced several poets not destitute of merit. The first of these was JAMES I., King of Scotland, whose mind and its productions, notwithstanding his being a native of that country, must be considered as of English growth. James had been taken prisoner in his boyhood by Henry IV. of England, and spent the nineteen years preceding 1424 in that country, where he was

instructed in all the learning and polite accomplishments of the age, and appears, in particular, to have carefully studied the writings of Chaucer. The only certain production of this ingenious young sovereign, is a long poem called *The King's Quhair*, or Book, in which he describes the circumstances of an affection which he formed, while a prisoner in Windsor Castle, for a young English princess whom he saw walking in the adjacent garden. \* This lady, a daughter of the Earl of Somerset, and, as it happened, a niece of Chaucer, was afterwards married to the young king, whom she accompanied to Scotland. While in possession of his kingdom, he is said to have written several poems descriptive of humorous rustic scenes ; but these cannot be certainly traced to him. He was assassinated at Perth in the year 1437.

About the year 1420, flourished THOMAS OCCLEVE, a lawyer, who wrote several poems of considerable merit, though now very little read. About the same time, or a little later, JOHN LYDGATE, a monk of Bury, was well known for his poetical compositions, which ranged over a great variety of styles. ' His muse,' says Warton, in his History of English Poetry, ' was of universal access ; and he was not only the poet of the monastery, but of the world in general. If a disguising was intended by the company of goldsmiths, a mask before his Majesty at Eltham, a Maygame for the sheriffs and aldermen of

\* His first thoughts, when this lovely vision was presented to a mind so long immured in prison, are in the highest style of poetry.

\*                    \*                    \*

Ah, swete ! are ye a worldly creature,  
Or hevynly thing in likenesse of nature ?  
Or ar ye Cupidis owne princesse,  
And coming are to loose me out of band ?  
*Or are ye very Nature the Goddess,*  
*That have depainted with your hevynly hand,*  
*This gardyn full of flouris, as they stand ?*  
What shall I think, alace ! what reverence  
Shall I mester unto your excellence ?

London, a mumming before the lord mayer, a procession of pageants from the Creation for the festival of *Corpus Christi*, or a carol for the Coronation, Lydgate was consulted, and gave the poetry.' The principal works of this versatile writer are entitled, *The History of Thebes*, *The Fall of Princes*, and *The Siege of Troy*. He had travelled in France and Italy, and studied the poetry of those countries; and though his own writings contain only a few good passages, he is allowed to have improved the poetical language of the country. He at one time kept a school in his monastery, for the instruction of young persons of the upper ranks in the art of versification; a fact which proves that poetry had become a favourite study among the few who acquired any tincture of letters in that age.

Not long after the time of Lydgate, our attention is called to another prose writer of eminence, SIR JOHN FORTESCUE, Chief Justice of the King's Bench under Henry VI., and a constant adherent of the fortunes of that monarch. Besides several Latin tracts, Chief Justice Fortescue wrote one in the common language, entitled, *The Difference between an Absolute and Limited Monarchy, as it more particularly regards the English Constitution*. In this work he draws a striking, though perhaps exaggerated contrast between the condition of the French under an arbitrary monarch, and that of his own countrymen, who even then possessed considerable privileges as subjects. The next writer of note was WILLIAM CAXTON, the celebrated printer; a man of plain understanding, but great enthusiasm in the cause of literature. While acting as an agent for English merchants in Holland, he made himself master of the art of printing, then recently introduced on the Continent, and having translated a French book styled, *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye*, he printed it at Ghent, in 1471, being the first book in the English language ever put to the press. Afterwards he established a printing-office at Westminster, and in 1474, produced *The Game of Chess*, which



was the first work printed in Britain. Caxton translated or wrote about sixty different books, all of which went through his own press before his death in 1491. As a specimen of his manner of writing, and of the literary language of this age, a passage is extracted below, in modern spelling, from the conclusion of his *Book of the Order of Chivalry*.\*

The reigns of Edward IV., Richard III., and Henry VII., extending between the years 1461 and 1509, were barren of true poetry, though there was no want of obscure versifiers. It is remarkable that this period produced in Scotland a race of genuine poets, who, in the words of Mr Warton, 'displayed a degree of sentiment and spirit, a command of phraseology, and a fertility of imagination, not to be found in any English poet since Chaucer and Lydgate.' Perhaps the explanation of this seeming mystery is, that the influences which operated upon Chaucer a century before, were only now coming with their full force upon the less favourably situated nation which dwelt north of the Tweed. Overlooking some obscurer names, those of Henryson, Dunbar, and Douglas, are to be mentioned with peculiar respect. ROBERT HENRYSON, schoolmaster of Dunfermline, wrote a series of fables in verse,

\* Alas ! what do ye but sleep and take ease, and are all disordered from chivalry. How many knights ben there now in England, that have the use and exercise of a knight. That is to wit, that he knoweth his horse, and his horse him ? That is to say, that he being ready at a point, to have all thing that longeth to a knight ; an horse that is according and broken after his hand ; his armours and harness meet and fitting and so forth ? I suppose, an a due search should be made, there should be many found that lack. The more the pity is. I would it pleased our sovereign lord, that twice or thrice in a year, or at least once, he would do cry *Justes of Pees*, to the end that every knight should have horse and harness, and also the use and craft of a knight, and also to tourney one against one, or two against two, and the best to have a prize, a diamond or jewel, such as should please the prince. This should cause gentlemen to resort to the ancient customs of chivalry, to great fame and renown, &c.

and a few miscellaneous poems, chiefly of a moral nature.\* WILLIAM DUNBAR, a man of higher and more varied genius, was a clergyman, and flourished at the Scottish court from about the year 1500 to 1530. Some of his poems are humorous, and refer to humble life; others are allegorical, and full of beautiful natural imagery; a third kind are moral and instructive; and he is equally happy in all. His principal allegorical poems are styled, *The Golden Terge*, *The Dance*, and *The Thistle and Rose*. The last was written in 1503, in honour of the nuptials of King James IV. with the Princess Margaret of England. *The Dance* describes a procession of the Seven Deadly Sins, two of which are described in the striking verses quoted below.† The moral and didactic

\* One of his fables is the common story of the Town Mouse and Country Mouse; and in the moral with which he concludes it, occurs the following verse, which will convey an idea of his didactic style:—

Blissit be simple life, withouten dreid;  
Blissit be sober feist in quieté;  
Wha has eneuch of no more has he neid,  
Though it be littill into quantité.  
Grit habowndance, and blind prosperiti,  
Oft tymis make ane evil conclusioun;  
The sweitest lyfe, theirfor, in this countre,  
Is of sickness, with small possession.

† Then IRE came in with *sturt*\* and strife;  
His hand was ay upon his knife,  
He *brandeist* like a *beir*; †  
Boasters, braggarts, and bargainers,  
After him passit in pairs,  
All *boden* in *feir* of *weir*. ‡  
In jacks, stir'ps, and bonnets of steel,  
Thair legs were *chenyed* || to the heel;  
*Frawart* was their *effeir*; §  
Some upon other *with brandis best*, ¶  
Some jaggit others to the heft  
With knives that sharp could shear.

\* Bloody fighting. † Bear. ‡ Arrayed in warlike manner.  
|| Covered with chains. § Forward was their manner. ¶ Struck with swords.

style of Dunbar is considered superior even to his allegorical manner. Altogether, he was certainly a man of the first order of genius; and it is evidently his antiquated language alone which prevents his works from being more generally known than they are.

The third eminent Scottish poet of this era was GAVIN DOUGLAS, bishop of Dunkeld, who flourished between the years 1496 and 1522; he shines as an allegorical and descriptive poet. His principal original compositions are entitled the *Palace of Honour*, and *King Hart*,—the former being an allegory designed to show to his sovereign, James IV., that nothing but virtue could lead to happiness, while the latter is a metaphorical view of the progress of human life. It is worthy of notice, that there is a remarkable resemblance between the former of these allegories and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, which was written about a century and a half later. Douglas also wrote a translation of the *Æneid* of Virgil in metre, with an original introductory poem to each of the twelve books. This was the first translation of a Roman classic into English verse, and it is considered one of considerable merit, notwithstanding the writer takes some liberties with the original. The language employed in it is nearly the same as that used by English writers of

Next in the dance followed ENVY,  
 Fill'd full of feid and fellony,  
 Hid malice and despite.  
 For privy hatred that traitor trembled,  
 Him followed mony freik\* dissembled  
 With *fengit* wordis white;  
 And flatterers unto men's faces,  
 And back-biters in secret places,  
 To lie that had delight,  
 With *rowmaris* of false leasings;†  
 Alas that courts of noble kings  
 Of them can ne'er be quite!

The spelling is here modernized, except in the words given in italic.

\* Forward youths.

† Circulators of false reports.

the same period, and affords a striking example of the rage which had begun to prevail for bringing Latin words with English terminations into the stock of our current speech.\*

SIR DAVID LINDSAY was another eminent poet of this class, though he flourished a little later than the others. He was the personal attendant and friend of James V., and latterly enjoyed the dignified heraldic office of Lyon King-at-Arms. He began to write about the year 1524, and died some time after 1567. He chiefly shines as a humorous and satirical writer. Besides several miscellaneous pieces, which display much talent, he composed a rude species of play called the *Satire of the Three Estates*, which was performed at Edinburgh and Cupar-in-Fife, and was supposed to have some effect in causing the overthrow of the Catholic church in Scotland.

The reign of Henry VIII., extending from 1509 to 1548, produced some writers, both in prose and poetry, considerably superior to those who had flourished in the three or four preceding reigns. Of the former, SIR THOMAS MORE, Lord Chancellor, is particularly worthy of notice. Being a devoted adherent of the Catholic faith, he published several pamphlets in defence of it, some of which were in English. He wrote, in 1516, his celebrated scheme of a moral republic, called *Utopia*; first published in Latin, and afterwards translated into English, though not by himself. Another of More's works was a

\* For instance, in a beautiful description of sunrise in the introduction to the twelfth book, the following passage occurs:—

The *auriate* vanes of his throne-soverane  
With glittering glance o'erspread the *ocean*;  
The large *fluids* leaming all of licht,  
With but ane blink of his *supernal* sight.  
For to behold it was ane *glorie* to see  
The stabled windis and the coloured sea,  
The soft season, the *firmament serene*,  
The lowne *illuminate* air, and firth *amene*, &c.

The words here given in *italic* are Latin, and would not have been employed in an earlier age.

*History of Edward V., and of his Brother, and of Richard III.*, which appeared first in English and then in Latin, and has been the chief source of information respecting those reigns to later writers, though it has recently been proved to give a very incorrect view of various important transactions. More was a man of most amiable character, and of great learning and natural talent, and was put to death by Henry VIII., in 1535, on account of his refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of that monarch over the church.

Another great prose-writer of the reign of Henry VIII. was JOHN LELAND, a Protestant clergyman, who, having devoted many years to the study of the antiquities of his native country, wrote a large and valuable work on that subject, entitled an *Itinerary*, which was not printed till the year 1710. Leland published, in his own lifetime, several books of less importance, in one of which he gave an account of all the English authors before his own time. There also flourished at this period several prose chroniclers of English history, whose writings, though destitute of judgment, and aiming at no literary excellence, are yet valuable for the facts which they contain. In 1523, LORD BERNERS published an English translation of Froissart's celebrated work, which commemorates the history of England, France, and other countries, during the chivalrous period of the fourteenth century. A few years later, JOHN BELLENDEN, Archdean of Moray, was employed by James V. to translate Hector Boece's History of Scotland, and the works of Livy; the former was published in 1536, and is the earliest existing specimen of Scottish literary prose. The first original prose work in that language was one entitled the *Complaynt of Scotland*, which was published at St Andrews in 1548, by an unknown author, and consists of a meditation on the distracted state of the kingdom. The difference between the language of these works, and that employed by More and other English contemporary writers, is very little.

The EARL OF SURREY and Sir Thomas Wyatt are the only poets of the reign of Henry VIII. whose writings now bear any value. The former was the eldest son of the Duke of Norfolk, and was born in 1516. He was educated at Windsor, in company with a natural son of the king, and in early life became accomplished, not only in the learning of the time, but in all kinds of courtly and chivalrous exercises. Having travelled into Italy, he became a devoted student of the poets of that country, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Ariosto, and formed his own poetical style upon theirs. His poetry is chiefly amorous, and, notwithstanding his having married in early life, much of it consists of the praises of a lady whom he names Geraldine, supposed to have been a daughter of the Earl of Kildare. Surrey was a gallant soldier as well as a poet, and conducted an important expedition, in 1542, for the devastation of the Scottish borders. He finally fell under the displeasure of Henry VIII., and was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1547. For justness of thought, correctness of style, and purity of expression, Surrey may be pronounced the first English classical poet; and it is worthy of notice that, in some translations from Virgil, he gave the earliest known specimen of *blank-verse*. SIR THOMAS WYATT was another distinguished character at the court of Henry VIII., and wrote many poems in much the same style with Surrey. He was the first polished satirist in English literature.

The religious reformation which took place during this reign, caused several English versions of the Bible to be placed before the public; and these were perhaps the most important of all the literary efforts of the time. The first part of the Scriptures published in an English form, was the New Testament in 1526, the translation being executed by WILLIAM TYNDALE, a young scholar of Oxford university. The Old Testament, translated by the same individual, appeared in 1530, and both were eagerly received and read by the people. Tyndale, five years after, was burnt to death in Flanders for these services to

the Protestant cause. In 1535, a new translation of the whole Bible was published by MILES COVERDALE, of the university of Cambridge; and other versions soon after appeared. The dissemination of so many copies of the Scriptures, where neither the Bible nor any considerable number of other books had formerly been in use, produced very remarkable effects. The versions first used, having been formed in some measure from the Latin translation called the *Vulgate*, contained many words from that language, which had hardly before been considered as English; such as perdition, consolation, reconciliation, sanctification, immortality, frustrate, inexcusable, transfigure, and many others requisite for the expression of compound and abstract ideas, which had never occurred to our Saxon ancestors, and therefore were not represented by any terms in that language. These words, in the course of time, became part of ordinary discourse, and thus the language was enriched. In the Book of Common Prayer, compiled in the subsequent reign of Edward VI., and which affords many beautiful specimens of the English of that time, the efforts of the learned to make such words familiar, are perceptible in many places; where a Latin term is often given with a Saxon word of the same, or nearly the same meaning following it, as 'humble and lowly,' 'assemble and meet together.' Another effect proceeded from the freedom with which the people were allowed to judge of the doctrines, and canvass the texts of the sacred writings. The keen interest with which they now perused the Bible, hitherto a closed book to the most of them, is allowed to have given the first impulse to the practice of reading in both parts of the island, and to have been one of the causes of the flourishing literary era which followed.

Among the great men of this age, it would be improper to overlook SIR JOHN CHEKE, professor of Greek at Cambridge, who first induced the learned of England to study that language, and the valuable literature embodied in it, with any considerable degree of care; he

was also one of the first who attempted to hold out precepts and models for the improvement of English composition. The earliest theoretical book on the latter subject, was published in 1553, by THOMAS WILSON of Cambridge, under the title of *The Art of Rhetoric*; it was a work of some merit. Another distinguished instructive writer of this age, was ROGER ASCHAM, preceptor to Queen Elizabeth. He wrote an essay entitled *Toxophilus*, to inculcate the propriety of mixing recreation with study, and a treatise called *The Schoolmaster*, containing directions for the most approved methods of studying languages. Much of the intellect and learning of the latter years of Henry VIII., and the whole reigns of Edward and Mary, was spent upon religious controversies, which, though interesting at the time, soon ceased to be remembered.

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### THIRD PERIOD.

THE REIGNS OF ELIZABETH, JAMES I., AND CHARLES I.  
[1558—1649.]

In the preceding sections, the history of English literature is brought to a period when its infancy may be said to cease, and its manhood to commence. In the earlier half of the sixteenth century, it was sensibly affected by a variety of influences, which, for an age before, had operated most powerfully in expanding the intellect of European nations. The study of classical literature, the invention of printing, the freedom with which religion was discussed, together with the substitution of the philosophy of Plato, for that of Aristotle, had everywhere given activity and strength to the minds of men. The immediate effects of these novelties upon English literature, were the enrichment of the language, as already mentioned, by a



great variety of words from the classic tongues, the establishment of better models of thought and style, and the allowance of greater freedom to the fancy and powers of observation in the exercise of the literary calling. Not only the Greek and Roman writers, but those of modern Italy and France, where letters experienced an earlier revival, were now translated into English, and, being liberally diffused by the press, served to excite a taste for elegant reading in lower branches of society, than had ever before felt the genial influence of letters. The dissemination of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, while it greatly affected the language and ideas of the people, was also of no small avail in giving new directions to the thoughts of literary men, to whom these antique Oriental compositions, presented numberless incidents, images, and sentiments, unknown before, and of the richest and most interesting kind.

Among other circumstances favourable to literature at this period, must be reckoned the encouragement given to it by Queen Elizabeth, who was herself very learned and addicted to poetical composition, and had the art of filling her court with men qualified to shine in almost every department of intellectual exertion. Her successors, James and Charles, resembled her in some of these respects, and during their reigns, the impulse which she had given to literature, experienced rather an increase than a decline. There was, indeed, something in the policy as well as in the personal character of all these sovereigns, which proved favourable to literature. The study of the belles lettres was in some measure identified with the courtly and arbitrary principles of the time, not perhaps so much from any enlightened spirit in those who supported such principles, as from a desire of opposing the puritans and other malecontents, whose religious doctrines taught them to despise some departments of elegant literature, and utterly to condemn others. There can be no doubt that the drama, for instance, chiefly owed that encouragement which it received under Elizabeth and her successors, to

a spirit of hostility to the puritans, who, not unjustly, repudiated it for its immorality. We must at the same time allow much to the influence which such a court as that of England, during these three reigns, was calculated to have among men of literary tendencies. Almost all the poets, and many of the other writers, were either courtiers themselves, or under the immediate protection of courtiers, and were constantly experiencing the smiles, and occasionally the solid benefactions of royalty. Whatever, then, was refined, or gay, or sentimental, in this country and at this time, came with its full influence upon literature.

The works brought forth under these circumstances, have been very aptly compared to the productions of a soil for the first time broken up, when 'all indigenous plants spring up at once with a rank and irrepressible fertility, and display whatever is peculiar and excellent in their nature, on a scale the most conspicuous and magnificent.' The ability to write having been, as it were, suddenly created, the whole world of character, imagery, and sentiment, as well as of information and of philosophy, lay ready for the use of those who possessed the gift, and was appropriated accordingly. As might be expected, where there was less rule of art than opulence of materials, the productions of these writers are often deficient in taste, and contain much that is totally aside from the purpose. To pursue the simile above quoted, the crops are not so clean as if they had been reared under systematic cultivation. On this account, the refined taste of the eighteenth century condemned most of the productions of the sixteenth and seventeenth to oblivion, and it is only of late that they have once more obtained their deserved reputation. After every proper deduction has been made, enough remains to fix this era as 'by far the mightiest in the history of English literature, or indeed of human intellect and capacity. There never was anything,' says the writer above quoted, 'like the sixty or seventy years that elapsed from the middle of

Elizabeth's reign to the period of the Restoration. In point of real force and originality of genius, neither the age of Pericles, nor the age of Augustus, nor the times of Leo X., nor of Louis XIV., can come at all into comparison; for in that short period, we shall find the names of almost all the very great men that this nation has ever produced, the names of Shakspeare, and Bacon, and Spenser, and Sydney, and Hooker, and Taylor, and Barrow, and Raleigh, and Napier, and Hobbes, and many others; men, all of them, not merely of great talents and accomplishments, but of vast compass and reach of understanding, and of minds truly creative and original; not perfecting art by the delicacy of their taste, or digesting knowledge by the justness of their reasonings, but making vast and substantial additions to the materials upon which taste and reason must hereafter be employed, and enlarging to an incredible and unparalleled extent, both the stores and the resources of the human faculties.\*

## POETS.

First among the poets of this age, in point of time, and also in point of genius, must be reckoned EDMUND SPENSER (1553-1598,†) the author of the *Faery Queen*. Spenser, whose parentage was humble, received his education at Cambridge, and entered life under the protection of the Earl of Leicester, to whom he had been introduced by Sir Philip Sydney. Having been appointed secretary to Lord Grey, the lord-lieutenant of Ireland, he emigrated to that country, where he spent a considerable portion of his life upon the estate of Kilcolman, near Cork, which was granted to him by Queen Elizabeth. Here he wrote his *Faery Queen*, which is an elaborate allegorical poem,

\* Edinburgh Review, XVIII. 275.

† Dates given in this form, and in connexion with names, throughout the present volume, refer to the birth and death of the individuals to whose names they are attached.

designed to celebrate the principal virtues. Only six of the original twelve books now remain, the rest having been lost by a servant on the passage from Ireland to England. Each of these is divided into twelve cantos, and the versification of the whole is in a peculiar stanza of nine lines, now commonly called the *Spenserian*, and remarkable for its elegance and harmony. Each book is devoted to the adventures of a particular knight, who personifies a certain virtue, as Holiness, Temperance, Courtesy, &c., and who moves in the midst of a whole host of sentiments and ideas, personified in the same way, the whole bearing the appearance of a chivalrous tale. The work, though upon the whole too tedious for the generality of modern readers, is justly regarded as one of the greatest compositions in English poetry. Spenser formed his manner, in some degree, upon the model of the Italian poets; and yet he is not only unlike them in many respects, but he is like no other English writer. 'The *Faery Queen*,' says a modern critic, 'is a peculiar world of itself, formed out of the extraordinary fancy of the author. His invention was without limit. Giants and dwarfs, fairies, and knights, and queens, rose up at his call. He drew shape after shape, scene after scene, castle and lake, woods and lawns, monstrous anomalies and beautiful impossibilities, from the unfathomable depths of his mind; yet all of them intended to represent some shade or kind of emotion, passion, or faculty, or the things upon which these are continually operating.' Some critics, while allowing the beauty of these creations, are of opinion that their very profusion, and the minuteness with which they are described, lessen their value, and give a tediousness to the whole poem. Perhaps it is fortunate for the *Faery Queen*, that one half of it was lost; and it might have even been improved in value by the want of a half of that which remains; for it is allowed that the strength of the work lies in the first three books.

As a specimen of the allegorical manner of Spenser,

may be given his description of that chamber of the brain which he supposes to be the residence of

#### MEMORY.

That chamber seemed ruinous and old,  
 And therefore was removed far behind ;\*  
 Yet were the walls that did the same uphold  
 Right firm and strong, though somewhat they declin'd ;  
 And therein sat an old old man, half blind,  
 And all decrepid in his feeble corse,  
 Yet lively vigour rested in his mind,  
 And recompensed him with a better score :  
 Weak body well is chang'd for mind's redoubled force.  
 This man of infinite remembrance was,  
 And things forgone through many ages held,  
 Which he recorded still as they did pass,  
 Nor suffer'd them to perish through long eld,  
 As all things else, the which this world doth weld,  
 But laid them up in his immortal scrine,  
 Where they for ever incorrupted dwell'd ;  
 The wars he well remember'd of King Nine,  
 Of old Assaracus and Inachus divine.  
 The years of Nestor nothing were to his,  
 Nor yet Methusalem, though longest liv'd ;  
 For he remember'd both their infancies :  
 Nor wonder, then, if that he were depriv'd  
 Of native strength, now that he them surviv'd.  
 His chamber all was hung about with rolls,  
 And old records from ancient times deriv'd,  
 Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolls,  
 That were all worm-eaten, and full of canker holes.

Spenser wrote several other poems of considerable extent, and also some works in prose, the chief of which was a *View of the State of Ireland*, in which he endeavoured to point out a way for the settlement of that country. In consequence of the Earl of Tyrone's rebellion, which took place in 1598, he was forced to fly from his estate and seek refuge in England, where he died in penury and dejection of mind, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

\* It was formerly supposed that memory lay in the hinder portion of the head.

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY (1554–1586), is chiefly known as the author of an allegorical prose romance called *Arcadia*, which, though now held as dull and antiquated, was the favourite light reading of the court ladies in the time of Elizabeth. His verses are not of remarkable merit, though the power of writing them must have been an agreeable addition to his character as a soldier and a gentleman. Owing to his singular union of accomplishments and amiable qualities, Sydney was the most admired and popular man of his times. At the early age of thirty-two, he received a mortal wound at a battle near Zutphen, in the Netherlands, when his generous character was manifested by an incident which will never be forgotten in the history of England, and of humanity. Being overcome with thirst from excessive bleeding, he called for drink, which, though not easily procured, was brought to him. At the moment he was lifting it to his mouth, a poor soldier was carried by, desperately wounded, who fixed his eyes eagerly upon the cup—Sydney, observing this, instantly delivered the beverage to him, saying, ‘Thy necessity is yet greater than mine.’

Spenser, Sydney, and Shakspeare, may be considered as the chief poetical names which fall more particularly under the reign of Elizabeth. The last, who will be noticed more at large in the department of the Dramatists, published, in early life, two poems of considerable length, one of which referred to the story of Venus and Adonis, and the other to the story of Lucretia; but his best productions in miscellaneous poetry are his sonnets, one hundred and fifty-four in number, in which he embodies much of his own character and daily thought, with a pathos in the highest degree interesting. As specimens, the following may be given:—

#### CONSOLATION FROM FRIENDSHIP.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought,  
 I summon up remembrance of things past,  
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
 And with old thoughts new wail my dear time's waste:

Then can I drown an eye unused to flow,  
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
 And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,  
 And moan th' expense of many a vanished sight.

Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er  
 The sad account of sore-bemoaned moan,  
 Which I now pay as if not paid before;  
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
 All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

## SELF-ABANDONMENT.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead,  
 Then you shall hear the surly sullen bell  
 Give warning to the world that I am fled  
 From this vile world, with vile things to dwell:

Nay, if you read this line, remember not  
 The hand that writ it; for I love you so,  
 That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,  
 If thinking on me then should make you woe.

O if (I say) you look upon this verse,  
 When I perhaps compounded am with clay,  
 Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,  
 But let your love even with my life decay:  
 Lest the wise world should look into your moan,  
 And mock you with me after I am gone.

Other poets immediately belonging to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, were Sir Walter Raleigh, who will presently be spoken of as a prose-writer; John Lyly, author of several plays, and originator of an affected and conceited style of speech called *Euphuism*; Sackville, Earl of Dorset; George Gascoigne; Thomas Lodge; and Robert Southwell; in all of whose works are to be found some strikingly beautiful pieces. It may be mentioned that this was the age when collections of fugitive and miscellaneous poetry first became common. Several volumes of this kind were published in the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth, and contain some lyrical poetry of the greatest merit, without any author's name. As a specimen of one of the forms

of composition, and one of the styles of thinking, followed in this age, we may give Southwell's little poem, entitled,—

## SCORN NOT THE LEAST.

Where wards are weak, and foes encountering strong,  
Where mightier do assault than do defend,  
The feebler part puts up enforced wrong,  
And silent sees that speech could not amend ;  
Yet higher powers must think, though they repine,  
When sun is set, the little stars will shine.

While pike do range, the silly tench doth fly,  
And crouch in privy creeks with smaller fish ;  
Yet pikes are caught when little fish go by,  
These fleet afloat, while those do fill the dish ;  
There is a time even for the worms to creep,  
And suck the dew while all their foes do sleep.

The marline cannot ever soar on high,  
Nor greedy greyhound still pursue the chase,  
The tender lark will find a time to fly,  
And fearful hare to run a quiet race.  
He that high growth on cedars did bestow,  
Gave also lowly mushrooms leave to grow.

In Haman's pomp poor Mordochæus wept ;  
Yet God did turn his fate upon his foe.  
The Lazar pin'd, while Dives' feast was kept,  
Yet he to heaven, to hell did Dives go.  
We trample grass, and prize the flowers of May ;  
Yet grass is green when flowers do fade away.

Among the poets more immediately belonging to the seventeenth century, or the reigns of James and Charles, the earliest presented to our notice is SAMUEL DANIEL (1562–1619), who spent the greater part of his life under the protection of noble and royal personages, and was distinguished as a writer of *masques*—namely, a dramatic kind of entertainment which, at this period, became fashionable at court, consisting chiefly of a few dialogues, supported by allegorical characters. The miscellaneous poems of Daniel were in general so applicable only to the persons and circumstances of his own age, that they



have fallen almost entirely out of notice. Yet he wrote in a style rather in advance of his time, and in some of his pieces rises to a high degree of excellence. His address to the Countess of Cumberland is still ranked among the finest effusions of meditative thought in the English language. It opens with the following stanzas, to which we shall give the title of

THE PHILOSOPHICAL OBSERVER.

He that of such a height hath built his mind,  
And rear'd the dwelling of his thoughts so strong,  
As neither hope nor fear can shake the frame  
Of his resolved powers; nor all the wind  
Of vanity or malice pierce to wrong  
His settled peace, or to disturb the same:  
What a fair seat hath he, from whence he may  
The boundless wastes and wilds of man survey?

And with how free an eye doth he look down  
Upon these lower regions of turmoil,  
Where all the storms of passions mainly beat  
On flesh and blood! where honour, power, renown,  
Are only gay afflictions, golden toil;  
Where greatness stands upon as feeble feet  
As frailty doth; and only great doth seem  
To little minds who do it so esteem.

He looks upon the mightiest monarch's wars,  
But only as on stately robberies;  
Where evermore the fortune that prevails  
Must be the right: the ill-succeeding wars  
The fairest and the best-fac'd enterprise.  
Great pirate Pompey lesser pirates quails:  
Justice he sees, as if reduced, still  
Conspires with power, whose cause must not be ill.

He sees the face of right t' appear as manifold  
As are the passions of uncertain man;  
Who puts it in all colours, all attires,  
To serve his ends, and makes his courses hold.  
He sees that, let deceit work what it can,  
Plot and contrive base ways to high desires;  
That the all-guiding Providence doth yet  
All disappoint and mocks this smoke of wit.

And whilst distraught ambition compasses,  
And is encompass'd ; whilst as craft deceives,  
And is deceiv'd ; whilst man doth ransack man,  
And builds on blood, and rises by distress ;  
And th' inheritance of desolation leaves  
To great expecting hopes ; he looks thereon,  
As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,  
And bears no venture in impiety.

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563–1631) is a very voluminous author, but, throughout the whole extent of his writings, shows the fancy and feeling of a true poet. His chief work is entitled *Polyolbion*, a poem in thirty parts, which he calls songs, constructed in an uncommon measure of twelve syllables, and containing a description of the island of Great Britain. The *Polyolbion* is a work entirely unlike any other in English poetry, both in its subject, and the manner in which it is written. It is full of topographical and antiquarian details, with innumerable allusions to remarkable events and persons, as connected with various localities ; yet such is the poetical genius of the author, so happily does he idealize almost every thing he touches on, and so lively is the flow of his verse, that we do not readily tire in perusing this vast mass of information. He seems to have followed the manner of Spenser in his unceasing personifications of natural objects, such as hills, rivers, and woods. The prevailing taste of Drayton is a mixture of the historical and the poetical ; and besides the *Polyolbion*, he wrote several poems, in which these two characteristics are very happily blended—such as the *Barons' Wars*, and *England's Heroical Epistles*. His miscellaneous writings are chiefly odes and pastorals. As a specimen of his cheerful and vivacious style, we may quote from the *Polyolbion* a description of the hunting of the hart in the forest of Arden in Warwickshire :

THE HUNTING OF THE HART.

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Now, when the hart doth hear  
The often-bellowing hounds to vent his secret lair,

He rousing rusheth out, and through the brakes doth drive,  
 As though up by the roots the bushes he would rive.  
 And through the cambrous thickets, as fearfully he makes,  
 He with his branched head the tender saplings shakes,  
 That, sprinkling their moist pearl, do seem for him to weep ;  
 When after goes the cry, with yellings loud and deep,  
 That all the forest rings and every neighbouring place ;  
 And there is not a hound but falleth to the chase.  
 Rechating\* with his horn, which then the hunter cheers,  
 Whilst still the lusty stag his high-palm'd head upbears,  
 His body showing state, with unbent knees upright,  
 Expressing from all beasts, his courage in his flight.  
 But when th' approaching foes still following he perceives,  
 That he his speed must trust, his usual walk he leaves ;  
 And o'er the champain flies ; which when the assembly find,  
 Each follows, as his horse were footed with the wind.  
 But being then imboast, the noble stately deer,  
 When he hath gotten ground, (the kennel cast arrear,)  
 Doth beat the brooks and ponds for sweet refreshing soil ;  
 That serving not, then proves if he his scent can foil,  
 And makes among the herds and flocks of shag-wool'd sheep,  
 Them frightening from the guard of those who had their keep.  
 But when as all his shifts his safety still denies,  
 Put quite out of his walk, the ways and fallows tries.  
 Whom when the ploughman meets, his team he letteth stand,  
 T' assail him with his goad : so with his hook in hand  
 The shepherd him pursues, and to his dog doth hollow ;  
 When, with tempestuous speed, the hounds and huntsman  
 follow ;  
 Until the noble deer, through toil bereaved of strength,  
 His long and sinewy legs then failing him at length,  
 The villages attempts, enraged, not giving way  
 To any thing he meets now at his sad decay.  
 The cruel rav'nous hounds and bloody hunters near,  
 This noblest beast of chase, that vainly doth but fear,  
 Some bank or quickset finds ; to which his haunch opposed,  
 He turns upon his foes, that soon have him inclosed.  
 The churlish-throated hounds then holding him at bay,  
 And as their cruel fangs on his harsh skin they lay,  
 With his sharp-pointed head he dealeth deadly wounds.  
 The hunter coming in to help his wearied hounds,  
 He desp'rately assails ; until, oppress'd by force,  
 He now the mourner is to his own dying corse.

JOSEPH HALL (1574-1656), bishop of Norwich, was

\* A peculiar kind of blast upon the hunting horn.

the first who wrote satire in English verse with any degree of elegance or success. His satires refer to general objects, and present some just pictures of the more remarkable anomalies in human character: they are also written in a style of greater polish and volubility than most of the compositions of this age. Richard Corbet, a preceding bishop of Norwich, but a contemporary of Hall, wrote some facetious poetry. Thomas Carew, a gay and courtly writer, flourished in the time of Charles I., whom he served in the office of sewer: his poetry is chiefly amorous, and rather more full of conceits than that of his contemporaries. The best lyrical pieces of ROBERT HERBERT, as selected from the heaps of trash which form the bulk of his works, display a redundancy of fancy, and a refinement of feeling, which make it somewhat surprising that he is so little known as a poet. He was a country clergyman, and seems to have had a peculiar pleasure in rural life. Some of his poems breathe the tender passion in its softest accents; others moralize in a strain of pleasing melancholy, upon natural objects; others again consist of mirthful measures, tripping along like a fairy dance. In the following little poem, there is a moral pathos of the most touching kind:—

TO DAFFODILS.

Fair daffodils, we weep to see  
You haste away so soon;  
As yet the early-rising sun  
Has not attain'd his noon.

Stay, stay,  
Until the hast'ning day  
Has run  
But to the even-song;  
And, having pray'd together, we  
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay like you;  
We have as short a spring;  
As quick a growth to meet decay  
As you or any thing.

We die  
 As your hours do, and dry  
 Away,  
 Like to the summer's rain ;  
 Or as the pearls of morning dew,  
 Ne'er to be found again.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1613-1641), a zealous partisan of Charles I. at the commencement of the civil war, is distinguished by a happy fancy, and an elegant mode of versification, with a descriptive power considerably beyond his contemporaries. His *Ballad upon a Wedding*, in which he makes one rustic describe to another a city bridal-party, is a masterpiece of gay poetical painting. Richard Lovelace was another of those lively court poets;—conceited, yet elegant and tender,—as, for instance, in his doubly gallant little epigram—

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS.

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,  
 That from the nunnery  
 Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind  
 To war and arms I fly.  
 True, a new mistress now I chase,  
 The first foe in the field ;  
 And with a stronger faith embrace  
 A sword, a horse, a shield.  
 Yet this inconstancy is such  
 As you, too, shall adore ;  
 I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
 Lov'd I not honour more.

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT (1605-1668), considered as a writer of miscellaneous verses, comes under the same description. Few snatches of composition, either in the preceding or the subsequent age, can match his complimentary lines on Queen Henrietta Maria, consort of Charles I.

Fair as unshaded light, or as the day  
 In its first birth, when all the year was May ;

Sweet as the altar's smoke, or as the new  
Unfolded bud, swell'd by the early dew ;  
Smooth as the face of waters first appear'd,  
Ere tides began to strive or winds were heard ;  
Kind as the willing saints, and calmer far  
Than in their sleeps forgiven hermits are.

WILLIAM BROWNE (1590-1645), author of *Britannia's Pastorals*, wrote with simplicity and feeling above most of his fellows, yet is now almost forgotten. Phineas Fletcher was also eminent in his own time as a pastoral poet. Giles Fletcher and Richard Crashaw chiefly employed themselves in sacred poetry, which was first cultivated in this age with success. Among the writers of miscellaneous poetry must be classed Benjamin Jonson, more celebrated as a dramatist: besides a few serious poems, he wrote a vast number of a humorous and epigrammatic character, which, however, are of little value. One of the most popular productions of the period was the short descriptive poem by Sir John Denham, entitled *Cooper's Hill*: it was published in 1643, and still holds its place in selections of our best poetry.

JOHN DONNE, dean of St Paul's (1573-1631), stands at the head of a class known in English literary history by the appellation of the Metaphysical Poets, and which comprised Cowley, and a few others who remain to be noticed in a subsequent chapter. Donne and his followers possessed many of the highest requisites of poetry, but they were misled by learning and false taste into such extravagancies, both of idea and of language, as rendered all their better qualities nearly useless. They sometimes use natural language, and natural imagery and passion; but it is only by chance. Their works more generally present a chain of overstrained conceits and quibbles. The versification of Donne is rugged, but sometimes displays a passionate energy that almost redeems his besetting vices of thought.

Scarcely any one of the poets of this age experienced so absolute an oblivion during the eighteenth century as

FRANCIS QUARLES (1592-1644), or has regained so much of his original reputation. Quarles, who was secretary to Archbishop Usher, and afterwards chronologer to the city of London, wrote much in both prose and verse; but his principal work was his *Emblems*, a set of quaint pictorial designs, referring to moral and religious ideas, and each elucidated by a few appropriate verses. His *Enchiridion*, a series of moral and political observations, is also worthy of notice. His verses were more popular in their own time than those of the gayest court poets, being recommended by a peculiar harshness and gloom, accordant with the feelings of a large portion of the people. These were the very peculiarities which, added to their quaintness and obscure language, rendered them the contempt of the succeeding period. In the time of Pope, the poetry of Quarles was ranked with the meanest trash that then appeared. Latterly, however, these productions have been acknowledged to contain original imagery, striking sentiment, fertility of expression, and happy combinations; and the *Emblems*, at least, have been reprinted, and assigned a respectable place in the libraries of both the devout, and those who read from motives of taste.

During the period embraced by the reign of Elizabeth, poetry was cultivated in Scotland by a few individuals, who, if not so celebrated as Dunbar and Lindsay, were at least worthy followers of the same school. The chief of these were ALEXANDER SCOT, SIR RICHARD MAITLAND, and CAPTAIN ALEXANDER MONTGOMERY. Their poems are chiefly short pieces of a moral, satirical, or descriptive kind; in which the versification is very correct, and the language in general very happy, though the style of the ideas seems a century behind that of the English poetry of the same age. The very limited social intercourse which existed at this period between the two nations, seems to have prevented the poets of Scotland from catching the improved airs of the English muse. One of the poets of this age, and by no means the worst, was the King, JAMES VI., who, in 1584, when only eighteen years of age, published

a volume of the rules of poetry, along with illustrative specimens ; and in 1591, produced another series of his exercises in this art. It was in the Latin tongue, however, that the highest Scottish genius of this age was pleased to express his thoughts: we allude to GEORGE BUCHANAN (1506-1582), a man of singularly vigorous and versatile powers. Buchanan wrote various moral, satirical, dramatic, and sentimental poems ; a History of Scotland ; and a translation of the Psalms ; employing in these compositions a style of Latinity, which is acknowledged to have rivalled that of the best Roman poets and historians.

The union of the crowns of England and Scotland under James I., produced a marked effect upon literature in the latter country. An acquaintance with the writings of the Elizabethan poets guided the style, if it did not prompt the genius, of WILLIAM DRUMMOND of Hawthornden (1585-1649), who, at his pleasant and retired seat near Edinburgh, wrote serious and sentimental poetry, of no small celebrity both in his own and in later times. Drummond was by birth and circumstances a gentleman, and, it would appear, of a melancholy, though amiable and affectionate temperament. He was known personally and by correspondence to the most of the contemporary English poets, one of whom, Ben Jonson, made a pedestrian pilgrimage into Scotland, in order to see him. The poetical works of Drummond consist of amatory sonnets and madrigals, chiefly expressive of a hopeless passion which possessed his own bosom ; some sacred poems ; a few complimentary odes and addresses to the two kings, James I. and Charles I., on their respective visits to Edinburgh ; and a variety of epigrammatic and humorous pieces. In many of these compositions there are passages of great delicacy and tenderness ; but, as with the minor poets of this age in general, it is difficult to find any entire piece which is not degraded by some share of insipidity, or by forced and cold conceits, or by that coarseness which, after all, seems to have been the pre-



vailing tone of mind in even the most enlightened portions of society at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The following sonnet does not contain such beautiful poetry as some others by Drummond ; but it has the rare property of a perfect exemption from mean associations. It refers to the death of his mistress :—

DRUMMOND TO HIS LUTE.

My lute, be as thou wert when thou did grow  
 With thy green mother in some shady grove,  
 When immelodious winds but made thee move,  
 And birds their ramage\* did on thee bestow.  
 Since that dear voice which did thy sounds approve,  
 Which went in such harmonious strains to flow,  
 Is reft from earth to tune the spheres above,  
 What art thou but a harbinger of woe ?  
 Thy pleasing notes be pleasing notes no more,  
 But orphan wailings to the fainting ear,  
 Each stroke a sigh, each sound draws forth a tear,  
 For which be silent as in woods before :  
 Or if that any hand to touch thee deign,  
 Like widow'd turtle still her loss complain.

SIR ROBERT AYTON (1570–1638), was another Scottish poet of this era, whose versification displays an elegant fancy. Of the same order may be classed William Alexander Earl of Stirling, Alexander Hume, and Robert Kerr Earl of Ancrum. Latin poetry, however, was at this time more extensively cultivated in Scotland than either English or Scotch. When James I. visited his native kingdom in 1617, he was addressed, wherever he went, in excellent Latin verse, sometimes the composition of persons in the middle ranks of society. In 1637, a collection of the best Latin poetical compositions of Scotsmen in that and the preceding age, appeared at Amsterdam ;† and it is allowed by Dr Samuel Johnson to reflect great credit on the country.

\* Warbling, from *Ramage*, French.

† Entitled *Delitæ Poetarum Scotorum*, 2 vols.

DRAMATISTS.

Notwithstanding the greatness of the name of Spenser, it is not in general versification that the poetical strength of the age of Elizabeth is found to be chiefly manifested. The dramatic form of composition rose at this period with sudden and wonderful brilliancy, and attracting all the best existing wits, left comparatively little genius to be expended upon the ordinary kinds of poetry.

It would appear that at the dawn of modern civilisation, most countries of Christian Europe possessed a rude kind of theatrical entertainment, consisting, not in those exhibitions of natural character and incident which constituted the plays of ancient Greece and Rome, but in representations of the principal supernatural events of the Old and New Testaments, and of the history of the saints; whence they were denominated *Miracles*, or *Miracle Plays*. Originally they appear to have been acted by, and under the immediate management of the clergy, who are understood to have deemed them favourable to the diffusion of religious feeling, though, from the traces of them which remain, they seem to have been profane and indecorous in the highest degree. A *Miracle Play*, upon the story of St Katherine, and in the French language, was acted at Dunstable in 1119, and how long such entertainments may have previously existed in England is not known. From the year 1268 to 1577, they were performed almost every year in Chester; and there were few large cities which were not then regaled in a similar manner; even in Scotland they were not unknown. The most sacred persons, not excluding the Deity, were introduced into them.

About the reign of Henry VI., persons representing sentiments and abstract ideas, such as Mercy, Justice, Truth, began to be introduced into the miracle plays, and led to the composition of an improved kind of drama, entirely or chiefly composed of such characters,

and termed *Moral Plays*. These were certainly a great advance upon the *Miracles*, in as far as they endeavoured to convey sound moral lessons, and at the same time gave occasion to some poetical and dramatic ingenuity, in imaging forth the characters, and putting appropriate speeches into their mouths. The only scriptural character retained in them was the devil, who, being represented in grotesque habiliments, and perpetually beaten by an attendant character called the *Vice*, served to enliven what must have been at the best a sober, though well-meant entertainment. *The Cradle of Security*, *Hit the Nail on the Head*, *Impatient Poverty*, and *The Marriage of Wisdom and Wit*, are the names of moral plays which enjoyed popularity in the reign of Henry VIII. It was about that time that acting first became a distinct profession: both *miracles* and *moral plays* had previously been represented by clergymen, schoolboys, or the members of trading incorporations, and were only brought forward occasionally, as part of some public or private festivity.

As the introduction of allegorical characters had been an improvement upon those plays which consisted of scriptural persons only, so was the introduction of historical and actual characters an improvement upon those which employed only a set of impersonated ideas. It was soon found that a real human being, with a human name, was better calculated to awaken the sympathies, and keep alive the attention of an audience, and not less so to impress them with moral truths, than a being who only represented a notion of the mind. The substitution of these for the symbolical characters, gradually took place during the earlier part of the sixteenth century; and thus, with some aid from Greek dramatic literature, which now began to be studied, and from the improved theatres of Italy and Spain, the genuine English drama took its rise.

As specimens of something between the moral plays and the modern drama, the *Interludes* of JOHN HEYWOOD may be mentioned. Heywood was supported at the

court of Henry VIII. partly as a musician, partly as a professed wit, and partly as a writer of plays. His dramatic compositions, some of which were produced before 1521, generally represented some ludicrous familiar incident, in a style of the broadest and coarsest farce, but yet with no small skill and talent. One, called *The Four P's*, turns upon a dispute between a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Poticary, and a Pedlar, (who are the only characters,) as to which shall tell the grossest falsehood: an accidental assertion of the Palmer, that he never saw a woman out of patience in his life, takes the rest off their guard, all of whom declare it to be the greatest lie they ever heard, and the settlement of the question is thus brought about amidst much drolery. One of Heywood's chief objects seems to have been to satirize the manners of the clergy, and aid in the cause of the Reformers. There were some less distinguished writers of interludes, and Sir David Lyndsay's *Satire of the Three Estates*, acted in Scotland in 1539, was a play of this kind.

The regular drama, from its very commencement, was divided into comedy and tragedy, the elements of both being found quite distinct in the rude entertainments above described, not to speak of the precedents afforded by Greece and Rome. Of comedy, which was an improvement upon the interludes, and may be more remotely traced in the ludicrous parts of the moral plays, the earliest specimen that can now be found bears the uncouth title of *Ralph Royster Doyster*, and was the production of NICOLAS UDALL, Master of Westminster School. It is supposed to have been written in the reign of Henry VIII., but certainly not later than 1551. The scene is in London, and the characters, thirteen in number, exhibit the manners of the middle orders of the people of that day. It is divided into five acts, and the plot is amusing and well constructed. The next in point of time is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, supposed to have been written about 1566 by JOHN STILL, Master of Arts, and afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells.

This is a piece of low rustic humour, the whole jest turning upon the loss and recovery of the needle with which Gammer Gurton was mending a piece of attire belonging to her man, Hodge. But it is cleverly hit off, and contains a few well-sketched characters.

The language of *Ralph Royster Doyster*, and of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, is in long and irregularly measured rhyme, of which a specimen may be given from a speech of Dame Custance in the former play, respecting the difficulty of preserving a good reputation :—

————— How necessary it is now a-days,  
That each body live uprightly in all manner ways ;  
For let never so little a gap be open,  
And be sure of this, the worst will be spoken !

Tragedy, of later origin than comedy, came directly from the more elevated portions of the moral plays, and from the pure models of Greece and Rome. The earliest known specimen of this kind of composition, is the *Tragedy of Ferrex and Porrex*, composed by Thomas Sackville, afterwards Earl of Dorset, and by Thomas Norton, and played before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall, by the members of the Inner Temple, in January 1561. It is founded on a fabulous incident in early British history, and is full of bloody murders and civil broils. It is written, however, in regular blank verse, consists of five acts, and observes some of the more useful rules of the classic drama of antiquity, to which it bears resemblance in the introduction of a chorus—that is, a group of persons whose sole business it is to intersperse the play with moral observations and inferences, expressed in lyrical stanzas. It may occasion some surprise that the first English tragedy should contain lines like the following :—

*Acæstus.* Your grace should now in these grave years of yours,  
Have found ere this the price of mortal joys ;  
How short they be, how fading here in earth,

How full of change, how little our estate,  
 Of nothing sure save only of the death,  
 To whom both man and all the world doth owe  
 Their end at last : neither should nature's power  
 In other sort against your heart prevail,  
 Than as the naked hand whose stroke assays  
 The armed breast where force doth light in vain.

*Gorboduc.* Many can yield right sage and grave advice  
 Of patient sprite to others wrapped in woe,  
 And can in speech both rule and conquer kind,\*  
 Who, if by proof they might feel nature's force,  
 Would show themselves men as they are indeed,  
 Which now will needs be gods.

Not long after the appearance of *Ferrex and Porrex*, both tragedies and comedies had become not uncommon. *Damon and Pythias*, the first English tragedy upon a classical subject, was acted before the queen at Oxford, in 1566 ; it was the composition of Richard Edwards, a learned member of the University, but was inferior to *Ferrex and Porrex*, in as far as it carried an admixture of vulgar comedy, and was written in rhyme. In the same year, two plays respectively styled the *Supposes* and *Jocasta*, the one a comedy adapted from Ariosto, the other a tragedy from Euripides, were acted in Gray's Inn. A tragedy called *Tancred and Gismunda*, composed by five members of the Inner Temple, and presented there before the Queen in 1568, was the first English play taken from an Italian novel. Within the ensuing twenty years, comedies, tragedies, histories (as expressly historical plays were called), and morals, were acted in great numbers, and several regular theatres were established in the metropolis for their performance. Among the most popular dramatic writers of that age, may be mentioned Jasper Heywood, Robert Greene, John Lyly, George Peele, Thomas Lodge, and Thomas Nash, all of whom, however, rank much beneath CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE, who is almost the only predecessor of Shakspeare worthy of being

\* The ties of blood.

classed with him. Marlowe (1562-1592), though educated at Cambridge, entered life as an actor, and thus was led to employ his poetical talents in dramatic composition. During his short life, he produced eight plays, besides miscellaneous poems, and wrought a great improvement in theatrical literature. In his *Tamburlain*, which was first acted in 1587, he broke through the old prejudice in favour of rhyme, which, notwithstanding the instance of *Ferrex and Porrex*, still kept possession of the public stage. The play is in lofty and sounding blank verse, which, beyond doubt, is alone qualified to give full effect to dramatic sentiment. In his *Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, supposed to have been produced in the ensuing year, he writes with a force and freedom unknown previously in our infant drama; and, calling in the aid of magic and supernatural agency, produces a work full of power, novelty, and variety. Marlowe delighted in delineating the strong and turbulent passions. His *Faustus* was designed to depict ambition in its most outrageous form; his *Jew of Malta*, on the other hand, exhibits every good and humane feeling under subjection to the love of money. His plays contain many passages of the highest poetic excellence.

If Marlowe had no other claim to notice, he would be deserving of it, as having, by the changes he wrought in dramatic poetry, prepared the way for Shakspeare, whose writings might have otherwise wanted the freedom of blank verse, and many other excellencies. Born at Stratford on the Avon, in a humble rank of life, WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE (1564-1616), was early called to London, probably by his relation, Robert Greene, and induced to become a player. He appears, about the year 1591, to have begun to compose plays for the company to which he belonged, with hardly any expectation of their ever being applied to a more noble or extensive use. The classes of subjects chosen by him, are the same with those adopted by other writers of his own age; namely, the more striking parts of ancient and modern history, and

the stories supplied by Italian novelists. His forms and modes of composition, with some degrading peculiarities of style, are also those of the age. Every thing else was his own. He possessed a power of depicting the characters of men in all their various shades, such as no writer of his own or any other age possessed; and his works abound with such strokes of wisdom, tenderness, fancy, and humour, as must still be pronounced unrivalled. After having lived for some years as a player, he became the manager of a theatre and company, and appears to have given up acting, for which, indeed, he is said to have not been highly qualified. In 1614, finding himself possessed of a small competency, he retired to his native town; and two years after, he died, and was buried in Stratford church. Little else is known of this wonderful man, whose modesty appears to have been as great as his genius. Though his writings were popular on the stage, he seems to have been hardly considered in his own age as a poet of any eminence; and it was not till about a century and a half after his death, that his transcendent merits were fully appreciated.

The plays of Shakespeare are thirty-five in number, some of them being ranked as tragedies, others as comedies, and some as historical dramas, though, in many of them, the characteristics of these classes are not very distinct. According to Mr Malone, they were produced in the following order, between the years 1591 and 1614:—*Love's Labour Lost*, *King Henry VI.* (three parts,) *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Winter's Tale*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hamlet*, *King John*, *King Richard II.*, *King Richard III.*, *Henry IV.* (first part,) *Merchant of Venice*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *King Henry IV.* (second part,) *King Henry V.*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *King Henry VIII.*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure*, *Cymbeline*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Julius Cæsar*,



*Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens, Othello, The Tempest, What You Will.* Eight other plays have been attributed to him, but, though received by German commentators, are rejected by the countrymen of the author. The most of the plays of Shakspeare were published in a detached form during his lifetime; but it was not till 1623, seven years after his death, that the first collected edition was published in one folio volume. This was thrice reprinted before the close of the seventeenth century, but without any attention being paid to the accuracy of the text. At length, in 1714, the poet Nicholas Rowe presented an edition in which an attempt was made to correct many words and phrases, which were either wrong or supposed to be so; now also was it thought, for the first time, necessary to gather a few particulars respecting the life of the author. The works of Shakspeare were subsequently edited by Pope, Theobald, Johnson, and other eminent persons of the eighteenth century, but without any great advantage to the text, till Mr Isaac Reed, Mr Steevens, and Mr Malone, by a diligent search in contemporary literature, and an intimate acquaintance with the domestic history of the time, were finally able to restore the works of this illustrious person to the state in which they were probably written at first. No English author has engaged so much of the attention of learned commentators, nor were any writings ever the subject of so passionate an admiration, as his have now become with the English people.

The most remarkable peculiarities of the mind of Shakspeare were certainly his power of conceiving characters; and, after conceiving them, or adopting them from history, the readiness with which he could throw himself, as it were, into them, so as to bring from them a discourse which every one will pronounce to be exactly what they might be expected to speak under the supposed circumstances. In none of the persons of his dramas, is any thing of their author to be seen. Every one speaks and acts for himself, and as he ought to speak and act. Even where

the character is a supernatural being, it conducts and delivers itself precisely according to the rules which might be conceived to affect it, and is as natural in its own way, as any other individual in the play. 'He not only had in himself the genius of every faculty and feeling, but he could follow them intuitively into all their conceivable ramifications, through every change of fortune, or conflict of passion, or turn of thought; and when he conceived a character, whether real or imaginary, he not only entered into all its thoughts and feelings, but seemed instantly, and as if by touching a secret spring, to be surrounded with all the same objects, the same local, outward, and unforeseen accidents which would occur in reality. In reading this author, you do not merely learn what his characters say—you see their persons. By something expressed or understood, you are at no loss to decipher their peculiar physiognomy, the meaning of a look, the grouping, the by-play, as we might see it on the stage. A word, an epithet, paints a whole scene, or throws us back whole years in the history of the persons represented. His plays are properly expressions of the passions, not descriptions of them. His characters speak like men, not like authors. Passion with him is not some one habitual feeling or sentiment, preying upon itself, growing out of itself, and moulding every thing to itself; it is modified by all the other feelings to which the individual is liable, and to which others are liable with him; subject to all the fluctuations of caprice and accident. The dialogues in *King Lear*, in *Macbeth*, that between Brutus and Cassius, and nearly all those in which the interest is wrought up to the highest pitch, afford examples of this dramatic fluctuation of passion.'

Shakespeare's imagination is of the same powerful kind as his conception of character and passion. It unites the most opposite extremes. He has a magic power over

\* The above quotation is a combination of detached passages in Mr Hazlitt's 'Essay on Shakespeare.'

words; one of which is often found to be employed so happily, that it is a picture in itself. Most of his epithets and single phrases are equally well applied, and many of them have now become part of the familiar language of the people.

Comparatively rude as the drama was in the days of Shakspeare, except in so far as his own compositions were concerned, and defective as all the theatres were in scenery and machinery, there has never been a period during which play-writing experienced so much public encouragement. To supply the fourteen playhouses which then existed in the metropolis, there were almost as many dramatists, who, in their own day, enjoyed a respectable celebrity, and may still be referred to for productions of merit. It is remarkable, however, that none of these writers, though most of them seem to have been men of good education, wrote with such pure taste as the unlettered son of the Stratford wool-stapler. Owing to their many glaring deficiencies, their impossible plots and fantastical characters, and the horrible incidents which they sometimes introduce, they were condemned to obscurity for about two centuries; but since the beginning of the present, the plays of a considerable number have been collected and printed, with notes and illustrations by learned individuals, and they now enjoy a considerable share of public notice, being appreciated for the fine snatches of poetry, passion, and humour, which are scattered through them. Overlooking Greene, Middleton, Rowley, and some inferior names, we may mention JOHN MARSTON, author of the tragedy of *Antonio and Mellida*, and the comedies of *What you Will*, *Parasitaster*, and *The Malcontent*, besides some of less merit. The forte of Marston is not sympathy with either the softer or the stronger emotions, but an impatient scorn and bitter indignation against the vices and follies of men; he was rather a satirist than a dramatist. GEORGE CHAPMAN (1557-1634), who is also distinguished as the first translator of Homer into English verse, has a high philosophical vein in his tragedies, and a very lively

humour in his comedies, but wants passion and imagination. His *All Fools*, *Widows' Tears*, and *Eastward Hoe*, are his most esteemed plays of the latter kind; the last contains the first idea of Hogarth's 'Idle and Industrious Apprentices.' THOMAS DEKKER exceeds most of his contemporaries in whimsical drollery; but yet, in the midst of all his humour, glances at the deepest and most touching of human emotions. He was the author of eleven distinct plays, besides portions of others, and of fourteen other publications, chiefly of a humorous kind.

JOHN WEBSTER, a tailor in London, and who appears in private life to have been a somewhat conceited person, is one of the most impressive of this class of writers. The plans of his dramas, like those of his contemporaries in general, are irregular and confused, the characters often wildly distorted, and the whole composition in some degree imperfect. Yet there are single scenes in his works, which, as exhibitions of the more violent passions, are inferior to nothing in the whole range of the British drama. He was a man of truly original genius, and seems to have felt strong pleasure in whatever was terrible, even though it might border on extravagance. The two best tragedies of Webster are *The Duchess of Malfy*, and *The White Devil*; in the former the interest turns upon the sufferings of an innocent and amiable woman, while in the latter it arises from the delineation of one of the worst of female characters. The Duchess is the victim of an atrocious enmity on the part of her two brothers, one of whom forms the design of having her murdered in prison, but first gratifies his fiendish malice by sending the inmates of a lunatic hospital to dance around her, for the purpose of driving her into madness. After the dance, a hired assassin named Bosola, who has throughout the play been her bitter enemy, enters in the disguise of an old man; and there ensues a scene, which may be given here, as a specimen of the tragic manner of these old dramatists.

## DEATH OF THE DUCHESS OF MALFY.

*Duch.* Is he mad too ?

*Servant.* Pray question him ; I'll leave you.

*Bos.* I am come to make thy tomb.

*Duch.* Ha ! my tomb ?

Thou speak'st as if I lay upon my death-bed,  
Gasping for breath. Dost thou perceive me such ?

*Bos.* Yes !

*Duch.* Thou art not mad ! Dost know me ?

*Bos.* Yes !

*Duch.* Who am I ?

*Bos.* Thou art a box of worm seed, &c.

*Duch.* Am not I thy Duchess ?

*Bos.* That makes thy sleep so broken :  
Glories, like glow-worms, afar off shine bright,  
But look'd to near, have neither heat nor light.

*Duch.* Thou art very plain.

*Bos.* My trade is to flatter the dead, not the living.  
I am a tomb-maker.

*Duch.* And thou comest to make my tomb ?

*Bos.* Yes !

*Duch.* Let me be a little merry :

Of what stuff wilt thou make it ?

*Bos.* Nay, resolve me first : Of what fashion ?

*Duch.* Why do we grow phantastical in our death-bed ?  
Do we affect fashion in the grave ?

*Bos.* Most ambitiously. Princes' images on the tombs  
Do not lie as they were wont, seeming to pray  
Up to heaven ; but with their hands under their cheek,  
As if they died of the tooth-ache ! They are not carved  
With their eyes fixed upon the stars ; but as  
Their minds were wholly bent upon the world,  
The self-same way they seem to turn their faces.

*Duch.* Let me know fully, therefore, the effect  
Of this thy dismal preparation !  
This talk fit for a charnel.

*Bos.* Now I shall. (*A coffin, cords, and a bell.*)  
Here is a present from your princely brothers.  
And may it arrive welcome, for it brings  
Last benefit, last sorrow.

*Duch.* Let me see it.

*Bos.* This is your last presence-chamber.

*Duch.* Peace ! it affrights not me.

*Bos.* I am the common Bellman,

That usually is sent to condemned persons  
The night before they suffer.

*Duch.* Even now thou saidst  
Thou was a tomb-maker.

*Bos.* 'Twas to bring you  
By degrees to mortification. Listen.

*Dirge.*

Hark ! now every thing is still !  
The scritch owl, and the whistler shrill  
Call upon our Dame aloud,  
And bid her quickly don her shroud.  
Much you had of Land and Rent,  
Your length in clay 's now competent.  
A long war disturb'd your mind,  
Here your perfect peace is sign'd.  
Of what is 't fools make such vain keeping ?  
Sin their conception, their birth weeping !  
Their life, a general mist of error,  
Their death, a hideous storm of terror !  
Strew your hair with powders sweet,  
Don clean linen, bathe your feet,  
And (the foul fiend more to check)  
A crucifix let bless your neck.  
'Tis now full tide, 'tween night and day,  
End your groan, and come away.

*Carola.* Hence, villains, tyrants, murderers, alas !  
What will ye do with my Lady ? Cry for help !

*Duch.* To whom ? to our next neighbours ? these are mad-folks.  
I pray thee, look thou givest my little boy  
Some syrup for his cold, and let the girl  
Say her prayers ere she sleep. Now what you please ?  
What death ?

*Bos.* Strangling—here are your executioners.

*Executioners.* We are ready.

*Duch.* Dispose my breath how please you ; but my body  
Bestow upon my women. Will you ?

*Eze.* Yes !

*Duch.* Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength  
Must pull down Heaven upon me.

Yet stay ! Heaven's gates are not so highly arch'd  
As Princes' palaces ! They that enter there  
Must go upon their knees. Come violent death,  
Serve for mandragora to make me sleep !  
Go, tell my brothers, when I am laid out,  
They then may sleep in quiet. [*They strangle her.*]

BEN JONSON (born 1574), the posthumous son of a clergyman in Westminster, worked in early life as a bricklayer with his stepfather, and afterwards served as a soldier in Flanders. After some unsuccessful attempts on the stage, he produced the comedy of *Every Man in his Humour*, which was brought out in 1598, at the Globe Theatre in Southwark, by the interest of Shakspeare, who acted a part in it: the success of this play established his reputation. Jonson wrote many other comedies, two tragedies, and several masques, in which last kind of composition he is allowed to have been unrivalled. He also wrote a variety of short miscellaneous poems. His tragedies, which bear the titles of *Cataline*, and *The Fall of Sejanus*, display a great deal of learning, but are cold and declamatory. His comedies, of which, besides that above-mentioned, *Volpone*, *The Silent Woman*, and *The Alchemist*, are the most celebrated, are full of humour, though of a somewhat coarser kind than that which prevails in the plays of his contemporaries. His characters, moreover, have the disadvantage of being rather the representatives of classes, or of particular passions and humours, than individual natural beings, as Shakspeare's invariably are. All his dramatic writings are deficient in passion and sentiment, and his genius seems to have been upon the whole best fitted for the production of those classic idealities which constituted the masque. For these reasons, though the great reputation attained by Ben Jonson in his own time still affects our consideration of him, he is not now much read, and *Every Man in his Humour* is the only one of his plays that continues to be occasionally performed. The character given of him by Drummond is worth copying, if not for its justice, at least for its force: he was 'a great lover and praiser of himself; a contemner and scoffer of others; rather given to lose a friend than a jest; jealous of every word and action of those about him, especially after drink, which was one of the elements in which he lived; a dissembler of the parts which reign in him; a bragger of

some others that he wanted—thinking nothing well done, but what he himself, or some of his friends, had said or done.' In 1619, he became poet-laureate, a situation which he held till his death in 1637. In his miscellaneous poems, Jonson is harsh and tedious, but he occasionally hits upon a very pleasing and fanciful strain, and does it full justice in expression. In his masque of *Cynthia's Revels*, the moon is addressed in a hymn, referring to her fine mythological character, and which has always been admired for its elegance and melody.

## HYMN TO DIANA.

Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,  
 Now the sun is laid to sleep;  
 Seated in thy silver car,  
 State in wonted manner keep.  
 Hesperus entreats thy light,  
 Goddess excellently bright!  
 Earth, let not thy envious shade  
 Dare itself to interpose;  
 Cynthia's shining orb was made  
 Heaven to clear when day did close;  
 Bless us then with wished sight,  
 Goddess excellently bright;  
 Lay thy bow of pearl apart,  
 And thy chrystal shining quiver;  
 Give unto the flying hart,  
 Space to breathe, how short soever;  
 Thou that mak'st a day of night,  
 Goddess excellently bright!

The compositions called *Masques* were carried to their greatest perfection in the time of Jonson, though, perhaps, none of them rivals the *Comus* of Milton, produced in the ensuing age. They were generally founded on some story from the Greek or Roman mythology; and, though therefore possessing little human interest, were so well set off by fine poetry, dresses, and machinery, that, during the reigns of James I. and Charles I.,



they formed a favourite amusement of the gay persons of the court, who were themselves the chief performers.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT (1586-1615) and JOHN FLETCHER (1576-1625) were two men of good birth and education, who agreed to write plays in company. Fifty-two dramatic compositions, tragic and comic, appear under their joint names; and only one or two out of that number are ascertained to have been written by either without assistance from his coadjutor. It is understood, however, that Fletcher, notwithstanding his being the older man, was chiefly employed in the business of imagining and writing the plays, while Beaumont had the task of chastening down and regulating the exuberant fancy of his senior. That a man who did not live thirty years, as was the case with Beaumont, should have helped to produce so many plays, will always be considered a remarkable circumstance in our literary history; nor will it ever cease to excite surprise, that an intellectual business of this kind should have been managed with so much apparent facility by a copartnery. In reference to this subject, it is related by one of their contemporaries, that, being at a tavern together for the purpose of sketching the outline of a tragedy, Fletcher was overheard by a waiter to undertake the *killing of the king*; which had nearly brought them into trouble as conspirators against the life of King James, before it was discovered that only a dramatic sovereign was meant. Hardly one of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher has retained possession of the stage, though many of them were popular for nearly a century after their own time. They are generally imperfect in their structure, the plots incongruous, and the characters imperfectly delineated. It is also a charge against these associated writers, that they were the first to depart from the general character of the dramatic writing of the age, which may be said to have consisted in an abandonment, on the part of the author, of all design except that of representing natural characters and their workings. Beaumont and Fletcher allow them-

selves to be seen in their plays, and betray a perpetual desire to introduce fine writing—the prevailing fault of almost all dramatic authors since their time. The rapidity with which they produced their plays, no doubt shows great fertility of genius ; but it has also given their productions an appearance of premature luxuriance. Mr Campbell says of them—‘ There are such extremes of grossness and magnificence in their drama, so much sweetness and beauty, interspersed with views of nature, either falsely romantic, or vulgar beyond reality ; there is so much to animate and amuse us, and yet so much that we would willingly overlook, that I cannot help comparing the contrasted impressions which they make, to those which we receive from visiting some great and ancient city, picturesquely but irregularly built, glittering with spires, and surrounded with gardens, but exhibiting in many quarters the lanes and hovels of wretchedness.’ The most celebrated of the comedies of Beaumont and Fletcher are, *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, *The Chances*, *The Wild-Goose Chase*, and *The Night-Walker* ; their best tragedies are *The False One*, *The Bloody Brother*, *The Maid’s Tragedy*, and *Boadicea*. *The Faithful Shepherdess*, by Fletcher alone, is a pastoral drama of very high merit in point of composition—‘ an exquisite union of dramatic and pastoral poetry,’ according to Mr Hazlitt.

As a favourable specimen of the tragic style of Beaumont and Fletcher, we may give Cæsar’s address to the head of Pompey, from *The False One* :—

## PITY FOR A SLAIN ENEMY.

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Oh thou conqueror,  
 Thou glory of the world once, now the pity ;  
 Thou awe of nations, wherefore didst thou fall thus ?  
 What poor fate follow’d thee and pluck’d thee on  
 To trust thy sacred life to an Egyptian ?  
 The life and light of Rome to a blind stranger,  
 That honourable war ne’er taught a nobleness,  
 Nor worthy circumstance show’d what man was ?

That never heard thy name sung but in banquets,  
 And loose lascivious pleasures ? to a boy,  
 That had no faith to comprehend thy greatness,  
 No study of thy life to know thy goodness ?  
 Egyptians, do you think your highest pyramids,  
 Built to outdare the sun, as you suppose,  
 Where your unworthy kings lie raked in ashes,  
 Are monuments fit for him ? No ; brood of Nilus,  
 Nothing can cover his high fame but heaven,  
 No pyramids set off his memories,  
 But the eternal substance of his greatness,  
 To which I leave him.

PHILIP MASSINGER, born in 1584, and educated at Oxford, employed himself in early life in assisting other writers, particularly Fletcher. About the year 1620, he began to write on his own account: the plays partly or entirely composed by him are thirty-eight in number, and of these only seventeen are printed in the fullest edition of his works, which is that published in 1805, in four volumes, with notes by Mr William Gifford. Though a tolerably successful dramatist, so precarious were the gains of literary labour in those days, that Massinger was generally in distressed circumstances. He was one of three playwrights who united in an application to the manager of a theatre, beseeching him for five pounds to relieve them from jail. He died in 1640, and was buried in St Saviour's Church, Southwark, by the side of his brother-poet Fletcher. Massinger's most successful play was the comedy of the *New Way to Pay Old Debts*, which continues still to be acted with applause. His tragedies are of even superior merit, but are mostly unfit for representation, on account of the nature of their plots. Of these *The Virgin Martyr*, *The Bondman*, and *The Duke of Milan*, are the most distinguished. Mr Campbell allows great praise to the dignity and harmony of his tragic verse, but says that he excels more in description and declamation, than in the forcible utterance of the heart, or in giving character the warm colouring of passion.

JOHN FORD (1586-1640) occupies an inferior place

among the dramatists of this age. He was designed for the legal profession, but, while a student in the Middle Temple, began to write plays and poems, of the former of which nine have been preserved. His chief play is the tragedy of *The Brother and Sister*, which, though in the highest degree objectionable on account of its subject, contains some scenes of striking excellence. The passion which Ford most successfully delineates is that of love: he excels in representing the pride and gallantry, and high-toned honour of youth, and the enchanting softness, or mild and graceful magnanimity of the female character.\*

The last of these dramatists that merits particular notice, is JAMES SHIRLEY (1594-1666), who was at one time a divine of the English Church, latterly a school-master, and is said to have died of a fright into which he was thrown by the great fire of London. Between the year 1629 and his death, Shirley published thirty-nine tragedies, comedies, and tragi-comedies, and was successful in all of these styles, but particularly in the second. Indeed, the comic scenes of Shirley display a refinement which completely distances the productions of his contemporaries, and reminds the reader of the *genteel comedy*, as it was called, of the succeeding century. On this account, we shall select from one of his plays the only specimen of the comic drama of the period, for which room can be afforded in the present volume. It relates to the extravagance of a lady who takes pleasure in nothing but the profligate gaieties of the city, and thinks herself entitled, in consideration of her high birth, to waste the fortune of her husband: it may be here presented under the title of

#### THE PRODIGAL LADY.

*Arctina and the Steward.*

*Stew.* Be patient, madam, you may have your pleasure.

*Arct.* 'Tis that I came to town for; I would not

\* Edinburgh Review, XVIII. 289.

Endure again the country conversation  
 To be the lady of six shires ! the men,  
 So near the primitive making, they retain  
 A sense of nothing but the earth ; their brains  
 And barren heads standing as much in want  
 Of ploughing as their ground : to hear a fellow  
 Make himself merry and his horse with whistling  
 Sellinger's round ; t' observe with what solemnity  
 They keep their wakes, and throw for pewter candlesticks ;  
 How they become the morris, with whose bells  
 They ring all into Whitsun ales, and swear  
 Through twenty scarfs and napkins, till the hobbyhorse  
 Tire, and the maid-marian, dissolved to a jelly,  
 Be kept for spoon meat.

*Stew.* These, with your pardon, are no argument  
 To make the country life appear so hateful,  
 At least to your particular, who enjoy'd  
 A blessing in that calm, would you be pleas'd  
 To think so, and the pleasure of a kingdom :  
 While your own will commanded what should move  
 Delights, your husband's love and power joined  
 To give your life more harmony. You liv'd there  
 Secure and innocent, beloved of all ;  
 Prais'd for your hospitality, and pray'd for :  
 You might be envi'd, but malice knew  
 Not where you dwelt.—I would not prophesy,  
 But leave to your own apprehension  
 What may succeed your change.

*Aret.* You do imagine,  
 No doubt, you have talk'd wisely, and confuted  
 London past all defence. Your master should  
 Do well to send you back into the country  
 With title of superintendent baillie.

*Enter Sir Thomas Bornwell.*

*Born.* How now, what's the matter ?  
 Angry, sweetheart ?

*Aret.* I am angry with myself,  
 To be so miserably restrained in things  
 Wherein it doth concern your love and honour  
 To see me satisfied.

*Born.* In what, Aretina,  
 Dost thou accuse me ? Have I not obeyed  
 All thy desires against mine own opinion ?  
 Quitted the country, and removed the hope

Of our return by sale of that fair lordship  
 We liv'd in ; chang'd a calm and retire life  
 For this wild town, compos'd of noise and charge ?

*Aret.* What charge more than is necessary  
 For a lady of my birth and education ?

*Born.* I am not ignorant how much nobility  
 Flows in your blood ; your kinsmen, great and powerful  
 I'th' state, but with this lose not your memory  
 Of being my wife. I shall be studious,  
 Madam, to give the dignity of your birth  
 All the best ornaments which become my fortune,  
 But would not flatter it to ruin both,  
 And be the fable of the town, to teach  
 Other men loss of wit by mine, employed  
 To serve your vast expenses.

*Aret.* Am I then  
 Brought in the balance so, sir ?

*Born.* Though you weigh  
 Me in a partial scale, my heart is honest,  
 And must take liberty to think you have  
 Obeyed no modest counsel to affect,  
 Nay study, ways of pride and costly ceremony.  
 Your change of gaudy furniture, and pictures  
 Of this Italian master and that Dutchman's ;  
 Your mighty looking-glasses, like artillery,  
*Brought home on engines ;* the superfluous plate,  
 Antique and novel ; vanities of tiers ;  
 Fourscore pound suppers for my lord, your kinsman ;  
 Banquets for t'other lady, aunt and cousins ;  
 And perfumes that exceed all : train of servants,  
 To stifle us at home and shew abroad,  
 More motley than the French or the Venetian,  
 About your coach, whose rude postilion  
 Must pester every narrow lane, till passengers  
 And tradesmen curse your choking up their stalls,  
 And common cries pursue your ladyship  
 For hind'ring o'the market.

*Aret.* Have you done, sir ?

*Born.* I could accuse the gaiety of your wardrobe  
 And prodigal embroideries, under which  
 Rich satins, plushes, cloth of silver, dare  
 Not shew their own complexions. Your jewels,  
 Able to burn out the spectator's eyes,  
 And shew like bonfires on you by the tapers.  
 Something might here be spared, with safety of  
 Your birth and honour, since the truest wealth

Shines from the soul, and draws up just admirers.  
I could urge something more.

*Aret.* Pray do; I like  
Your homily of thrift.

*Born.* I could wish, madam,  
You would not game so much.

*Aret.* A gamester too?

*Born.* But you are not to that repentance yet  
Should teach you skill enough to raise your profit;  
You look not through the subtlety of cards  
And mysteries of dice, nor can you save  
Charge with the box, buy petticoats and pearls,  
Nor do I wish you should. My poorest servant  
Shall not upbraid my tables, nor his hire,  
Purchas'd beneath my honour. You may play,  
Not a pastime but a tyranny, and vex  
Yourself and my estate by 't.

*Aret.* Good,—proceed.

*Born.* Another game you have, which consumes more  
Your fame than purse; your revels in the night,  
Your meetings called the ball, to which appear.  
As to the court of pleasure, all your gallants  
And ladies, thither bound by a subpoena  
Of Venus and small Cupid's high displeasure;  
'Tis but the family of love translated  
Into a more costly sin. There was a play on 't,  
And had the poet not been brib'd to a modest  
Expression of your antic gambols in 't,  
Some deeds had been discover'd, and the deeds too.  
In time he may make some repent and blush  
To see the second part danc'd on the stage.  
My thoughts acquit you for dishonouring me  
By any foul act, but the virtuous know  
'Tis not enough to clear ourselves, but the  
Suspensions of our shame.

*Aret.* Have you concluded  
Your lecture?

*Born.* I have done; and howsoever  
My language may appear to you, it carries  
No other than my fair and just intent  
To your delights, without curb to their fair  
And modest freedom.

Among the inferior dramatists of the age may be mentioned, George Wilkins, author of *The Miseries of*

*Enforced Marriage*; Robert Tailor, author of *The Hog hath Lost his Pearl*; Thomas Heywood, a player, and very voluminous play-writer, having assisted in the composition of no fewer than two hundred and twenty different pieces; Dr Jasper Fisher, author of *The Two Trojans*; Thomas May, author of *The Heir*, a comedy, *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, and other dramas; Brome, Nabbes, Randolph, Mayne, Habington, Marmion, Cartwright, Davenport, and Barry. Of all these writers specimens may be found in *Dodsley's Collection of Old Plays*, of which a third enlarged edition appeared in 1825, in twelve volumes. At the close of the reign of Charles I., the drama sank with the party which chiefly supported it, and did not revive till the restoration of monarchy in 1660. As it arose in a form considerably different, the class of dramatists whom we have been describing stand almost entirely by themselves in English literature, being only connected with their successors by SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT, who wrote plays both before and after the civil war and the Commonwealth, and partook of the merits of the one period, with the faults (hereafter to be pointed out) of the other.

#### PROSE-WRITERS.

The prose-writers of this age rank chiefly in the departments of theology, philosophy, and historical and antiquarian information. There was as yet hardly any vestige of prose employed with taste in fiction, or even in observations upon manners; though it must be observed, that one of the first prose works of the time was the pastoral romance of *Arcadia* by Sir Philip Sydney, which was written in the year 1580, and has been already alluded to.

One of the earliest, and also one of the greatest of the prose-writers of the period, was RICHARD HOOKER (1554-1600), a man of obscure birth, educated by the charity of individuals, and who spent the better part of his days in



- an obscure situation in the Church. He wrote a work of immense learning, reflection, and eloquence, which was published in 1594, under the title, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, being a defence of the Church to which he belonged, against the sect called Puritans. This work is not to be regarded simply as a theological treatise; it is still referred to as a great authority upon the whole range of moral and political principles. It also bears a value as the first treatise in the English language which observed a strict methodical arrangement, and clear logical reasoning. The style perspicuous, forcible, and manly, evidently flows from the pure source of an ingenuous and upright mind.

WILLIAM CAMDEN (1551-1623) was also of humble birth, and owed his education to charity. Like Leland, he travelled over the greater part of England, with a view to the composition of a topographical work, which appeared in 1586, under the title of *Britannia*, and was soon after translated from the original Latin into English. The *Britannia* is a description of England, Ireland, and Scotland, such as they were in the time of the writer, and is a compilation of great value. It occupied the author ten years, and he had to study the British and Saxon tongues before commencing it. Camden also wrote a Greek grammar, and some works of inferior importance. In the latter part of his life he attained the dignity of a prebend of Sarum, and was one of the kings-at-arms. He was much respected for his learning and industry, both in England and in foreign countries.

Next to Sir Philip Sydney, the most favourite personage of this period of English history is SIR WALTER RALEIGH, (born of an honourable family in Devonshire, 1552; beheaded 1618,) who is distinguished as a soldier, as a courtier, as an adventurous colonizer of barbarous countries, and as a poet and historian. Raleigh spent many of his early years in foreign wars, and, in 1580, was very serviceable to Queen Elizabeth, in quelling a rebellion in Ireland. Between 1584 and 1595, he conducted

several nautical expeditions of importance, some of which were designed for the colonization of Virginia—an object upon which he spent forty thousand pounds. On the accession of King James in 1603, he was, with apparent injustice, condemned for high treason, and committed to the Tower, where he remained for fourteen years. Part of this time he spent in the composition of his principal work, entitled *The History of the World*, the first part of which appeared in 1614, bringing down the narrative nearly to the birth of Christ: the portions which refer to the history of Greece and Rome are much admired. Sir Walter wrote several political treatises, which were not published till after his death. His poetry was the production of his earlier years, and possesses great merit. After his long imprisonment, he was allowed by the king to proceed upon an expedition to South America, in which he failed; and he was then executed upon his former sentence.

FRANCIS BACON (1561–1626), Lord Chancellor of England, and latterly created Viscount of St Alban's, was one of the greatest men of this, or of any other age. He wrote upon history and law, the advancement of learning, and nearly all matters relating to the cultivation of mind. Of his works, which extend to ten volumes, the most remarkable are, *The Proficiency and Advancement of Learning*, published in 1605, and afterwards enlarged, and his *Novum Organum*, published in 1620; which, with the former book in its extended shape, forms one grand work, under the title of *The Instauration of the Sciences*. In this magnificent production, he first answers the objections made to the progress of knowledge, and then proceeds to divide human learning into three parts, history, poesy, and philosophy, respectively referring to memory, imagination, and reason, which he conceived to be the proper distribution of the intellectual faculties. He next explains his new method (*novum organum*) of employing these faculties for the increase of real knowledge; namely, the ascertainment, in

the first place, of facts, and then reasoning upon these towards conclusions—a mode of arriving at truth which may appear very obvious, but which was nevertheless unknown to the predecessors of this illustrious person. Formerly, men reasoned in a quibbling manner, without regard to facts, according to a plan laid down by Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher. It was Bacon who first showed that nothing pretending to the character of human knowledge could be considered as ascertained, unless it had been subjected to the test of experiment, or drawn from observations patent to the senses. A subsequent portion of the *Instauratio* contained a history of Nature, intended as a pattern of the method of employing his *novum organum*; and in a still farther section, he showed the steps, as he called them, by which the human intellect might regularly ascend in its philosophical inquiries. He had intended to write something more, which should complete his design, but was prevented by want of time. This splendid work, which has given a new turn to the mind of man, and been of incomprehensible utility in promoting knowledge, was planned by its author at twenty-six years of age, when he was a student of law in Gray's Inn; and it was prosecuted under the pressure of many heavy duties. It can never be told without shame, that its author, notwithstanding the skill with which he surveyed past knowledge, and pointed the way to much more important acquisitions, was inferior in practical virtue to many humbler men, being found guilty by Parliament of receiving bribes as Lord Chancellor, for the infamous purpose of perverting justice. His style of writing is almost as much ornamented by figures of rhetoric as the contemporary poetry, yet it is never on that account found wanting in precision. As a specimen, may be given a few passages from his chapter on the

#### USES OF KNOWLEDGE.

Learning taketh away the wildness, barbarism, and fierceness of men's minds; though a little of it doth rather work a contrary

effect. It taketh away all levity, temerity, and insolency, by copious suggestion of all doubts and difficulties, and acquainting the mind to balance reasons on both sides, and to turn back the first offers and conceits of the kind, and to accept of nothing but [what is] examined and tried. It taketh away all vain admiration of any thing, which is the root of all weakness : for all things are admired, either because they are new, or because they are great. \* \* \* If a man meditate upon the universal frame of nature, the earth with men upon it (the divineness of souls excepted) will not seem more than an ant-hill, where some ants carry corn, and some carry their young, and some go empty, and all to and fro a little heap of dust. It taketh away or mitigateth fear of death, or adverse fortune : which is one of the greatest impediments of virtue, and imperfection of manners. \* \* \* Virgil did excellently and profoundly couple the knowledge of causes and the conquest of all fears together. It were too long to go over the particular remedies which learning doth minister to all the diseases of the mind,—sometimes purging the ill humours, sometimes opening the obstructions, sometimes helping the digestion, sometimes increasing appetite, sometimes healing the wounds and ulcerations thereof, and the like ; and I will therefore conclude with the chief reason of all, which is, that it disposeth the constitution of the mind not to be fixed or settled in the defects thereof, but still to be capable and susceptible of reformation. For the unlearned man knoweth not what it is to descend into himself, and call himself to account ; nor the pleasure of that *most pleasant life, which consists in our daily feeling ourselves become better*.\* The good parts he hath, he will learn to show to the full, and use them dexterously, but not much to increase them : the faults he hath, he will learn how to hide and colour them, but not much to amend them ; like an ill mower, that mows on still and never whets his scythe. Whereas with the learned man it fares otherwise, that he doth ever intermix the correction and amendment of his mind with the use and employment thereof.

It was the opinion of Bacon, that knowledge was the same as power. His own life unfortunately showed that there might be great knowledge without power. Subsequent philosophers have agreed that knowledge is what Bacon described it, only when combined with moral excellence, which, though apt to be favoured and improved by knowledge, is not always found in its company.

\* This expression is given in the original in Latin.

One of the most entertaining prose-writers of this age was ROBERT BURTON (1576-1640), rector of Segrave in Leicestershire, and a member of the college of Christ Church in Oxford. This individual led a studious and solitary life in his college, till he at length became oppressed with melancholy, and resolved to write a book upon that subject, with the view of curing himself. This work, which appeared in 1621, is entitled *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, and presents, in quaint language, and with many shrewd and amusing observations, a full view of all the kinds of that disease. It was so successful at first, that the publisher realized a fortune by it; and Warton says, that 'the author's variety of learning, his quotations from scarce and curious books, his pedantry, sparkling with rude wit and shapeless elegance, miscellaneous matter, intermixture of agreeable tales and illustrations, and perhaps, above all, the singularities of his feelings, clothed in an uncommon quaintness of style, have contributed to render it, even to modern readers, a valuable repertory of amusement and information.' The author, it is said, from a calculation of his nativity, foretold the time of his own death, which occurred at the period he predicted, but not without some suspicion of its having been occasioned by his own hand. In his epitaph, in the cathedral of Oxford, he is described as having lived and died by melancholy.

It may be observed, that there was no absolute want of the lighter kind of prose during this age. Several of the dramatists and others amused themselves by throwing off small works of a satirical and humorous cast, but all of them in a style so far from pure or elegant, and so immediately referring to passing manners, that they have, with hardly an exception, sunk into oblivion. THOMAS DEKKER, who has already been spoken of as a writer of plays, produced no fewer than fourteen works of this kind; in one, entitled *The Gull's Hornbook*, published in 1609, he assumes the character of a guide to the fashionable follies of the town, but only with the design of ex-

posing them to ridicule. What he says here respecting fine clothes and luxurious eating, may serve as a specimen of the light writing of the period :

#### DEKKAR AGAINST FINE CLOTHES.

Good clothes are the embroidered trappings of pride, and good cheer the very root of gluttony. Did man, think you, come wrangling into the world about no better matters, than all his lifetime to make privy searches in Birchin-Lane for whalebone doublets, or for pies of nightingale's tongues in Heliogabalus his kitchen? No, no; the first suit of apparel that ever mortal man put on, came neither from the mercer's shop, nor the merchant's warehouse: Adam's bill would have been taken then, sooner than a knight's bond now; yet was he great in nobody's books for satin and velvets. The silk-worms had something else to do in those days than to set up looms, and be free of the weavers. His breeches were not so much worth as King Stephen's, that cost but a poor noble; for Adam's holiday hose and doublet were of no better stuff than plain fig-leaves, and Eve's best gown of the same piece; there went but a pair of shears between them. An antiquary of this town has yet some of the powder of those leaves to show. Tailors then were none of the twelve companies; their hall, that now is larger than some dorfes among the Netherlanders, was then no bigger than a Dutch butcher's shop: they durst not strike down their customers with large bills: Adam cared not an apple paring for their lousy hems. There was then neither the Spanish slop, nor the skipper's galligaskin, nor the Danish sleeve, nor the French standing collar: your treble-quadruple ruffs, nor your stiff-necked rabatos, that have more arches for pride, than can stand under five London bridges, durst not then set themselves out in point; for the patent for starch could by no means be signed. Fashion was then counted a disease, and horses died of it: but now, thanks to folly, it is held the only rare physic; and the purest golden asses live upon it.

One of the greatest writers and most conspicuous political characters of the time, was JOHN SELDEN (1584-1654), a lawyer of active and vigorous character. Selden figured as a friend of liberal government, in the Parliaments of Charles I., and had a distinguished share in the framing of the Petition of Rights, by which that sovereign was induced to make a large concession of his monarchical

privileges. He published a great variety of legal, political, and antiquarian tracts, replete with learning, and displaying in many parts no small share of good sense, but none of which, except his *Table Talk*, are now very popular. HALL, bishop of Norwich, whose poetical satires have already been alluded to, wrote *Occasional Meditations*, which still retain popularity as a devotional work, besides many controversial pamphlets, which made a strong impression in their own day. His prose composition is admired for its sententious firmness, and brevity. LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY (1581-1648), is remarkable as the first infidel writer in the English language; he was a man of lively and eccentric genius, and wrote also the first autobiography in the language. The work for which he is now chiefly valued, is his history of the Reign of Henry VIII. THOMAS HOBBS (1588-1679), of Malmesbury, is celebrated as the first great English writer on political philosophy. Being a zealous friend of monarchy, he began in 1628 to publish a long series of works, designed to warn the people as to the consequences of their efforts for the reduction of the royal power. The most remarkable of these, was one published in 1651, to which he gave the singular title of the *Leviathan*; this was designed to prove philosophically, that the only source of security, which is the grand end of government, is in a monarchical form, which the people have no right to challenge. His peculiar sentiments on this point, which have never been popular in this country, are excused by the admirers of his writings, on account of his naturally timid character, which had been violently shocked by the events of the civil war. It is very curious that, while Hobbes maintained the necessity of an established church under the supremacy of a temporal monarch, he expressed doubts of the existence of that deity, whose worship it is the business of a church to encourage. He is said to have read very little of the works of preceding philosophers, yet he was able to pursue his arguments with great logical

dexterity ; he trusted almost entirely to his own reflection, and used to say, ' If I had read as much as other people, I should have been as ignorant as they.'

JEREMY TAYLOR, born of mean parents at Cambridge, between the years 1600 and 1610, is one of the most admired English writers, especially in the department of theology. He was equally devoted, with Hobbes, to the monarchy and the church, and on that account was obliged to live in obscurity during the time of the Commonwealth ; after which, he was raised by Charles II. to the bishopric of Downe and Connor. His principal works are, *The Liberty of Prophecy*, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, and *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*. *The Liberty of Prophecy* is remarkable as the first treatise published in England, in which it was assumed, and attempted to be proved, that no man has a right to prescribe the religious faith of another, or to persecute him for difference of opinion. *The Holy Dying* is considered the best of the other two works, and is still a favourite book with serious people. He also published many sermons, which contain some strikingly fine passages. An eminent critic says of Bishop Taylor, that, ' in any one of his prose folios, there is more fine fancy and original imagery—more brilliant conceptions and glowing expressions—more new figures and new applications of old figures—more, in short, of the body and soul of poetry, than in all the odes and epics that have since been produced in Europe.' This excellent divine died in 1667.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE is another of the eloquent and poetical, though somewhat quaint writers, of this great literary era. He was born in London in 1605, educated at Oxford, and spent the greater part of his life as a physician in Norwich. His first work, entitled *Religio Medici*, [*The Religion of a Physician*,] published in 1635, contains innumerable odd opinions on things spiritual and temporal. Another work, published in 1646, under a learned title, which has been exchanged for the familiar one of *Browne's*



*Vulgar Errors*, displays great eloquence, learning, and shrewdness, in exposing the erroneous sources of many commonly received opinions. His most celebrated work is *Hydriotaphia*, a discourse upon some sepulchral urns dug up in Norfolk. Sir Thomas here takes occasion to speculate upon the vain hopes of immortality cherished by men respecting their worldly names and deeds, since all that remains of those buried in the Norfolk urns is a little dust, to which no name, nor the remotest idea as to individual character, can be attached. Many of his thoughts on this subject are truly sublime, and the whole are conveyed in the most impressive language.

One of the most important literary undertakings of this era, was the present authorized translation of the Bible. At the great conference held in 1604 at Hampton Court, between the established and puritan clergy, the version of Scripture then existing was generally disapproved of, and the King, consequently, appointed fifty-four men, many of whom were eminent as Hebrew and Greek scholars, to commence a new translation. In 1607, forty-seven of the number met, in six parties, at Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster, and proceeded to their task, a certain portion of Scripture being assigned to each. Every individual of each division, in the first place, translated the portion assigned to the division, all of which translations were collected; and when each party had determined on the construction of its part, it was proposed to the other divisions for general approbation. When they met together, one read the new version, whilst all the rest held in their hands either copies of the original, or some valuable version; and on any one objecting to a passage, the reader stopped till it was agreed upon. The result was published in 1611, and has ever since been reputed as a translation generally faithful, and an excellent specimen of the language of the time.

Among the less important prose-writers of the reigns of James and Charles, may be mentioned, John Speed, a tailor of the city of London, who compiled large works

on the geography and history of Great Britain, in a style superior to his predecessors ; Sir Henry Spelman, an eminent writer on legal antiquities ; Sir Robert Cotton, a historical and antiquarian writer, whom posterity has to thank for the valuable collection of historical manuscripts now preserved in the British Museum ; Samuel Purchas, the compiler of a great collection of voyages, and of an account of all the religions in the world ; Thomas May, author of a History of the Long Parliament ; James Usher, Archbishop of Armagh (1581-1656), who wrote many able and learned works in controversial theology and ecclesiastical history ; James Howell (1596-1668), a Welshman, who had travelled in many countries, and in 1645 published a series of letters, referring to historical and political subjects, which are considered the first good specimens of epistolary literature in the language ; Dr Peter Heylin, a noted writer of ecclesiastical history, but full of prejudices ; and lastly, the sovereigns themselves, whose works, however, are now only estimated in the light of curiosities.

During the reigns of Elizabeth, James, and Charles, literary language received large accessions of Greek and Latin, and also of the modern French and Italian, and made a great advance in flexibility, grace, and ease. The prevalence of Greek and Roman learning was the chief cause of the introduction of so many words from those languages. Vain of their new scholarship, the learned writers delighted in parading Greek and Latin words, and even whole sentences ; so that some specimens of the composition of that time seem to be a mixture of various tongues. Bacon, Burton, and Browne, were among those who most frequently adopted long passages from Latin authors ; and of Ben Jonson it is remarked by Dryden, that he ' did a little too much to Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them.' It would appear that the rage, as it may be called, for originality, which marked this period, was one of the causes of this change in our language.

‘Many think,’ says Dr Heylin in 1658, ‘that they can never speak elegantly, nor write significantly, except they do it in a language of their own devising; as if they were ashamed of their mother tongue, and thought it not sufficiently curious to express their fancies. By means whereof, more French and Latin words have gained ground upon us since the middle of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, than were admitted by our ancestors (whether we look upon them as the British or Saxon race), not only since the Norman, but the Roman conquest.’ To so great an extent was Latin thus naturalized among English authors, that Milton at length, in his prose works, and also partly in his poetry, introduced the *idiom*, or peculiar construction of that language; which, however, was not destined to take a permanent hold of English literature; for we find immediately after, that the writings of Clarendon, Dryden, and Barrow, were not affected by it.

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#### FOURTH PERIOD.

THE COMMONWEALTH, AND REIGNS OF CHARLES II. AND  
JAMES II.—[1649–1689.]

THE forty years comprehended in this period, produced, in the department of poetry, the great names of Milton and Dryden—in divinity, those of Barrow and Tillotson—and in philosophy, those of Temple and Locke. This was also the era of Bunyan, who was the first successful instance of the unlettered class of writers, since become so numerous. It may be called a period of transition; that is to say, the ease, originality, and force of the Elizabethan era, were now in the process of being exchanged for the artificial stiffness and cold accuracy which marked our literature during the eighteenth century.

## POETS.

Among the poets, EDMUND WALLER (1605–1687) ranks first in point of time. He was by birth a gentleman, and figured on the popular side in the Long Parliament, though he afterwards became a royalist. His poetry partakes of the gay and conceited manner of the reign of Charles I., and chiefly consists in complimentary verses, of an amatory character, many of which are addressed to a lady whom he calls Sacharissa, and whose proper name was Lady Dorothy Sydney, afterwards Countess of Sunderland. In his latter years, he wrote in the new and more formal manner which had by that time been introduced. ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618–1667) retains a higher reputation than Waller. He wrote poetry of considerable merit at ten years old, and had greatly improved in the art at twelve. His works consist of Anacreontics, (light gay trifles in the manner of the Greek poet Anacreon;) elegiac poems; an epic named *The Davids*; a long poem descriptive of plants; and a few epistles and miscellanies. These compositions possess great shrewdness, ingenuity, and learning; yet, though they frequently excite admiration, they seldom convey pleasure. The false taste of the age, and a fatal propensity to treat every thing abstractly or metaphysically, deform in his case the productions of a very able intellect. His Anacreontics alone are now relished; and of these one of the best is the

## ODE TO THE GRASSHOPPER.

Happy insect! what can be  
 In happiness compared to thee?  
 Fed with nourishment divine,  
 The dewy Morning's gentle wine!  
 Nature waits upon thee still,  
 And thy verdant cup does fill;  
 'Tis fill'd wherever thou dost tread,  
 Nature's self's thy Ganymede!

Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing,  
 Happier than the happiest king !  
 All the fields which thou dost see,  
 All the plants, belong to thee ;  
 All that summer hours produce,  
 Fertile made with early juice :  
 Man for thee does sow and plow ;  
 Farmer he, and landlord thou !  
 Thou dost innocently joy,  
 Nor does thy luxury destroy.  
 The shepherd gladly heareth thee,  
 More harmonious than he.  
 These country hinds with gladness hear,  
 Prophet of the ripen'd year !  
 These Phœbus loves, and does inspire ;  
 Phœbus is himself thy sire.  
 To thee, of all things on the earth,  
 Life is no longer than thy mirth.  
 Happy insect ! happy thou  
 Dost neither age nor winter know :  
 But when thou'st drunk, and danc'd, and sung,  
 Thy fill, the flow'ry leaves among,  
 (Voluptuous and wise withal,  
 Epicurean animal !)  
 Sated with thy summer feast,  
 Thou retir'st to endless rest.

The greatest poet of this age, if not in the whole range of the English poets, was JOHN MILTON (1608-1674), the son of a London scrivener, and born in that city. This illustrious person, who had the rare fortune to be educated as a man of letters, wrote, in his early years, some short poems, in the manner of the reign of Charles I., already described, but with more taste. Of these, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* continue in the highest degree popular, and will probably ever be so. In middle life, being of republican principles, he employed himself in writing pamphlets in favour of the Commonwealth, and afterwards acted as Latin secretary to Cromwell. At the Restoration he went into retirement, and, though struck with blindness, devoted himself to the composition of an epic poem, which he had long contemplated, upon the subject of the Fall of Man. This memorable work was publish-

ed in 1667, under the title of *Paradise Lost*, but did not for several years attract much attention, being in a style too elevated and pious for the taste of the age. The bargain which the bookseller made with the author on this occasion, has excited the surprise of posterity. The publisher allowed only five pounds at first, a similar sum when thirteen hundred copies had been sold, and as much for every subsequent edition which should be published. Milton received only ten pounds in all, and his widow sold the remainder of the copyright for eight. Yet it must not be inferred from this that the poet was poor, for at his death he left fifteen hundred pounds to his family.

The *Paradise Lost* is in blank verse, and the first considerable specimen of that kind of poetry, apart from the drama. It is divided into twelve books, and relates, with the greatest dignity of thought and language, the circumstances of the fall of man, not only as far as these can be gathered from the Scriptures, but with the advantage of many fictitious incidents, which in the course of time had sprung up, or which the imagination of the poet supplied. Elevated partly by the nature of his subject, and partly by the piety of his own mind, Milton has in this work reached a degree of poetical excellence which seems to throw all preceding and subsequent writers into the shade. The *Paradise Lost* resembles nothing else in literature; it stands on a height by itself, and, as there are no other themes of equal sublimity, it will never probably be matched. A critic, analysing the poetical character of Milton, says, he has 'sublimity in the highest degree; beauty in an equal degree; pathos next to the highest; perfect character in the conception of Satan, of Adam, and Eve; fancy, learning, vividness of description, stateliness, decorum. His style is elaborate and powerful, and his versification, with occasional harshness and affectation, superior in variety and harmony to all other blank verse: it has the effect of a piece of fine music.'

Considerable portions of the *Paradise Lost* are descriptive of scenes and events above this world; and, as man

can form no ideas of which the objects around him have not supplied at least the elements, the poet may be said to have there fallen short of his design. Sublime as his images are, and lofty the strain of his sentiments, still his heaven is only a more magnificent kind of earth, and his most exalted supernatural beings only a nobler order of men. This is, however, what was to have been expected; and when we judge the poet by the ordinary reach of the human faculties, we shall perhaps find these passages the finest in the book. The description of the battle, for instance, between the angelic host of God and the followers of the rebel Satan, though only a grander sort of earthly fight, and even affected by the military costume of the seventeenth century, can never fail to be admired as something above the powers of ordinary poets.

As a specimen of the milder and more familiar descriptions in the *Paradise Lost*, we present

#### ADAM'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF.

———As new wak'd from soundest sleep  
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid  
In balmy sweat, which with his beams the sun  
Soon dry'd, and on the reeking moisture fed,  
Straight toward Heav'n my wond'ring eyes I turn'd,  
And gaz'd awhile the ample sky, till rais'd  
By quick instinctive motion up I sprung,  
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright  
Stood on my feet. About me round I saw  
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,  
And liquid lapse of murmur'ing streams; by these,  
Creatures that liv'd and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew,  
Birds on the branches warbling; all things smil'd,  
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflow'd.  
Myself I then perus'd, and limb by limb  
Survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran  
With supple joints, as lively vigour led:  
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,  
Knew not; to speak I try'd, and forthwith spake;  
My tongue obey'd, and readily could name  
Whate'er I saw. Thou Sun, said I, fair light,  
And thou enlighten'd Earth, so fresh and gay,

Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,  
And ye that live and move, fair creatures tell,  
Tell if ye saw, how I came thus, how here;  
Not of myself, by some great Maker then,  
In goodness and in power pre-eminent;  
Tell me how I may know him, how adore  
From whom I have that thus I move and live,  
And feel that I am happier than I know.  
While thus I call'd, and stray'd, I knew not whither,  
From where I first drew air, and first beheld  
This happy light, when answer none return'd,  
On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,  
Pensive I sat me down; there gentle sleep  
First found me, and with soft oppression seiz'd  
My droused sense, untroubled, though I thought  
I then was passing to my former state  
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:  
When suddenly stood at my head a Dream,  
Whose inward apparition gently mov'd  
My fancy to believe I yet had being,  
And liv'd: One came, methought of shape divine,  
And said, Thy mansion waits thee, Adam, rise,  
First man, of men innumerable ordain'd  
First father, call'd by thee I come thy guide  
To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepar'd.  
So saying, by the hand he took me rais'd,  
And over fields and waters, as in air  
Smooth sliding without step, last led me up  
A woody mountain, whose high top was plain,  
A circuit wide, inclosed, with goodliest trees  
Planted, with walks, and bowers, that what I saw  
Of earth before scarce pleasant seem'd, each tree  
Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to th' eye  
Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite  
To pluck and eat; whereat I wak'd and found  
Before mine eyes all real, as the dream  
Had lively shadow'd: here had now begun  
My wand'ring, had not he who was my guide  
Up hither, from among the trees appear'd  
Presence divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,  
In adoration at his feet I fell  
Submit: he rear'd me, and whom thou sought'st I am,  
Said mildly, author of all this thou see'st  
Above, or round about thee, or beneath.  
This paradise I give thee, count it thine  
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat



Of every tree that in the garden grows,  
Eat freely with glad heart ; for here no dearth :  
But of the tree whose operation brings  
Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set,  
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,  
Amid the garden by the tree of life,  
Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,  
And shun the bitter consequence : for know  
The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command  
Transgress'd, inevitably thou shall die,  
From that day mortal, and this happy state  
Shalt lose, expell'd from hence into a world  
Of woe and sorrow.

Milton afterwards wrote a sequel to his *Paradise Lost*, under the title of *Paradise Regained*, in which he represented the circumstances of the redemption of man. This poem is in four books, and is considered much inferior to the other, but only in consequence, perhaps, of the less poetical nature of the subject. He also wrote a dramatic poem on the story of Sampson, and a beautiful masque entitled *Comus*.

Strongly contrasted to Milton in every respect was his contemporary, SAMUEL BUTLER (1612-1680), the son of a farmer in Worcestershire, and at all times a poor man, but possessed of a rich fancy, and a singular power of witty and pointed expression. His chief work was *Hudibras*, published in 1663 and subsequent years ; a comic poem in short-rhymed couplets, designed to burlesque the characters of the zealously religious and republican party, which had recently held sway. Notwithstanding the service which he thus performed to the royalist cause and to Charles II., he was suffered to die in such poverty, that the expense of his funeral was defrayed by a friend. In *Hudibras*, a republican officer of the most grotesque figure and accoutrements, is represented as sallying out, like a knight-errant, for the reformation of the state ; and his character is thus, in the first place, described :—

## CHARACTER OF SIR HUDIBRAS.

He was in logic a great critic,  
 Profoundly skill'd in analytic:  
 He could distinguish, and divide  
 A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;  
 On either which he would dispute,  
 Confute, change hands, and still confute;  
 He'd run in debt by disputation,  
 And pay with ratiocination:  
 All this by syllogism true,  
 In mood and figure he would do.  
 For rhetoric, he could not ope  
 His mouth, but out there flew a trope:  
 And when he happen'd to break off  
 I' th' middle of his speech, or cough,  
 H' had hard words ready to show why,  
 And tell what rules he did it by;  
 Else when with greatest art he spoke,  
 You'd think he talk'd like other folk;  
 For all a rhetorician's rules  
 Teach nothing but to name his tools.  
 But, when he pleas'd to show 't, his speech  
 In loftiness of sound was rich;  
 A Babylonish dialect,  
 Which learned pedants much affect;  
 It was a party-colour'd dress  
 Of patch'd and py-bald languages;  
 'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,  
 Like fustian heretofore on satin;  
 It had an old promiscuous tone,  
 As if h' had talk'd three parts in one;  
 Which made some think, when he did gabble,  
 Th' had heard three labourers of Babel,  
 Or Cerberus himself pronounce  
 A leash of languages at once.  
 This he as volubly would vent,  
 As if his stock would ne'er be spent:  
 And truly to support that charge,  
 He had supplies as vast and large;  
 For he could coin or counterfeit  
 New words, with little or no wit;  
 Words so debas'd and hard, no stone  
 Was hard enough to touch them on:  
 And when with hasty noise he spoke 'em,  
 The ignorant for current took 'em:

That had the orator, who once  
 Did fill his mouth with pebble stones  
 When he harangu'd but known his phrase,  
 He would have used no other ways.  
 In mathematics he was greater  
 Than Tycho Brahe or Erra Pater ;  
 For he, by geometric scale,  
 Could take the size of pots of ale ;  
 Resolve by sines and tangents straight,  
 If bread or butter wanted weight ;  
 And wisely tell what hour o' th' day  
 The clock does strike by algebra.  
 Beside, he was a shrewd philosopher,  
 And had read ev'ry text and gloss over ;  
 Whate'er the crabbed'st author hath,  
 He understood b' implicit faith ;  
 Whatever sceptic could inquire for,  
 For ev'ry why he had a wherefore ;  
 Knew more than forty of them do,  
 As far as words and terms could go ;  
 All which he understood by rote,  
 And, as occasion serv'd, could quote ;  
 No matter whether right or wrong ;  
 They might be either said or sung.

After having for upwards of a century been excluded from the ranks of the English poets, ANDREW MARVELL (1620-1678) has recently begun once more to attract attention. He was the friend of Milton, and, like him, zealously devoted to the popular cause in politics. It is related of him, that, while he represented the town of Hull in Parliament, and was without any other resources than a small allowance, which he received for that duty, a courtier was sent with a thousand pounds in gold to buy him over to the opposite side ; he placidly refused the bribe, pointing to a blade-bone of mutton which was to serve for his dinner on the ensuing day, as a proof that he was above necessity. The works of Marvell, amidst much sorry writing, contain a few passages of exquisite beauty ; one of which is here presented under the title of

## THE NYMPH'S DESCRIPTION OF HER FAWN.

With sweetest milk, and sugar, first  
 I it at mine own fingers nurs'd :  
 And as it grew so every day  
 It wax'd more white and sweet than they.  
 It had so sweet a breath ! and oft  
 I blush'd to see its foot more soft,  
 And white, shall I say ? than my hand—  
 Than any lady's of the land !

It was a wondrous thing how fleet  
 'Twas on those little silver feet.  
 With what a pretty skipping grace  
 It oft would challenge me the race ;  
 And when 't had left me far away,  
 'Twould stay, and run again, and stay.  
 For it was nimbler much than hinds,  
 And trod as if on the four winds.

I have a garden of my own,  
 But so with roses overgrown,  
 And lilies that you would it guess  
 To be a little wilderness ;  
 And all the spring time of the year  
 It loved only to be there.  
 Among the beds of lilies I  
 Have sought it oft, where it should lie ;  
 Yet could not, till itself would rise,  
 Find it although before mine eyes ;  
 For in the flaxen lilies shade,  
 It like a bank of lilies laid.  
 Upon the roses it would feed,  
 Until its lips ev'n seem'd to bleed ;  
 And then to me 't would boldly trip,  
 And print those roses on my lip.  
 But all its chief delight was still  
 On roses thus itself to fill ;  
 And its pure virgin lips to fold  
 In whitest sheets of lilies cold.  
 Had it liv'd long, it would have been  
 Lilies without, roses within.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700), while marked by some of the characteristics of the early poets, may be described as the first and most distinguished cultivator of the more artificial kind of verse, which was introduced at the Resto-

ration from France, and prevailed till the close of the eighteenth century. He was the son of a Northamptonshire gentleman, and was educated at Westminster School, and the University of Cambridge. Soon after the accession of Charles II., he appears to have established himself in London, as a poet and dramatist by profession, and on the death of Davenant, in 1668, he became poet-laureate. For forty years, Dryden practised the literary trade which he had chosen, enjoying, during that period, a high though not undisputed reputation, and suffering considerably from poverty. His plays, twenty-seven in number, of the various classes of tragedies, comedies, and tragi-comedies, are, upon the whole, unworthy of his genius. Most of his poems were written upon passing events and characters; and of this class the most celebrated are, *Absalom and Achitophel*, a satire upon the Whig leaders of the time of Charles II., *The Year of Wonders*, *Mac Flecnoe*, and his *Fables*. These poems, with his *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*, and a few of his other satirical pieces, are now deemed his best. He also translated the Works of Virgil, the Satires of Persius, part of the Satires of Juvenal, and portions of other classic authors, into English epic verse. Dryden was a man of amiable and virtuous dispositions, but was tempted by the taste of the age to write on many occasions very licentiously, and allowed himself to be hurried away by injured self-love into rancorous controversies, which impaired his peace, and degraded his genius. Two versifiers named Shadwell and Settle, whose works fell into oblivion immediately after their authors ceased to exist, were the chief objects of the jealousy and hatred of this great bard; and although they had hardly any importance except from his anger, they were able to give him much serious annoyance. In spite of his faults, which were not small, Dryden continues to be regarded as one of the most illustrious of English poets. He was endowed with a vigorous and excursive imagination, and possessed a mastery over language which no subsequent writer has attained.

With little tenderness or humour, he had great power of delineating character, wonderful ease, an almost sublime contempt for mean things, and sounding, vehement, varied versification. The fine enthusiasm of the following stanzas almost rises to the height of Milton: they are from his

ODE TO THE MEMORY OF MRS ANNE KILLIGREW.

Thou youngest virgin daughter of the skies,  
Made in the last promotion of the blest;  
Whose palms, new pluck'd from paradise,  
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,  
Rich with immortal greens above the rest:  
Whether adopted to some neighbouring star,  
Thou roll'st above us in thy wand'ring race,  
Or in procession fix'd and regular,  
Mov'st with the heaven-majestic pace;  
Or, call'd to more superior bliss,  
Thou tread'st, with seraphims, the vast abyss:  
Whatever happy region is thy place,  
Cease thy celestial song a little space;  
Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,  
Since heav'n's eternal year is thine.

If by traduction came thy mind,  
Our wonder is the less to find  
A soul so charming from a stock so good;

• • •  
But if thy pre-existing soul  
Was form'd at first with myriads more,  
It did through all the mighty poets roll,  
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,  
And was that Sappho last which once it was before.  
If so, then, cease thy flight, O heaven-born mind!  
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore:  
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find,  
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind,  
Return to fill or mend the choir of thy celestial kind.

May we presume to say, that, at thy birth,  
New joy was sprung in heaven, as well as here on earth.  
For sure the milder planets did combine  
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,  
And ev'n the most malicious were in trine.

Thy brother angels at thy birth  
 Strung each his lyre and tun'd it high,  
 That all the people of the sky  
 Might know a poetess was born on earth.

The description of the Duke of Buckingham in *Abso-  
 lom and Achitophel*, under the fictitious name of Zimri,  
 is a good specimen of Dryden's satirical manner: it is a  
 singularly happy sketch of a wayward, eccentric, and  
 contradictory character.

#### CHARACTER OF THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

A man so various that he seem'd to be  
 Not one, but all mankind's epitome:  
 Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,  
 Was every thing by starts and nothing long;  
 But in the course of one revolving moon  
 Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:  
 Then all for preaching, painting, rhyming, drinking,  
 Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.  
 Blest madman who could every hour employ,  
 With something new to wish, or to enjoy!  
 Railing and praising were his various themes,  
 And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:  
 In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:  
 Nothing went unrewarded but desert.  
 Beggar'd by fools whom still he found too late;  
 He had his jest, and they had his estate.  
 He laugh'd himself from court, then sought relief  
 By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:  
 Thus wicked but in will, of means bereft,  
 He left not faction, but of that was left.

The difference between the style of versification here  
 exemplified, and that which flourished in earlier times,  
 cannot fail to be remarked. The poets antecedent to the  
 Commonwealth, especially Spenser, Shakspeare, Drayton,  
 and the dramatists of the reign of James I., uttered senti-  
 ments, described characters, and painted external nature,  
 with a luxuriant negligence and freedom, occasionally  
 giving way to coarseness and conceit, and though appa-  
 rently unable at any time to perceive when they were

writing effectively or otherwise, they were always easy; and frequently very happy. They formed nothing like what is called a *school of writers*, for they had hardly any rules to be acquired. The Commonwealth, with its religious and political troubles, may be said to have put an end to this class of poets. Those who sprung up in the ensuing period, studied as their model the stately and regular versification that prevailed in France, to which they were introduced by the adherents of the court, who had endured a long exile in that country. This new method was introduced with the imposing character of the style of civilized Europe, as regulated by the most authoritative rules of antiquity, while the old English manner, which had no followers on the Continent, was regarded as something too homely for polished society. Tenderness and fancy were now exchanged for satire and sophistry; lines, rugged perhaps, but sparkling with rich thought, and melting with genuine feeling, gave place to smooth, accurate, monotonous epic couplets, in which the authors would have been ashamed to display any profound sentiment, or any idea of startling novelty. The very subjects of poetry were now essentially different from what they had been. The new order of writers, men of scholarly education and accustomed to live in fashionable society, applied themselves to describe the artificial world of manners, to flatter or satirize their contemporaries; or, if they at times ventured upon anything connected with rural nature, it was not till they had disguised it under a set of cold lifeless images, borrowed from the pastorals of antiquity. The nymphs and swains of this class of poets, were like the nymphs and swains of a masquerade, well-bred people dressed in good clothes, rather fancifully made. The former were Delias, or Cloes, or Corinnas; the latter Damons, or Strephons, or Cymons. They might have the crook or the milk-pail in their hands, but they had not human nature in their hearts, nor its language upon their tongues. The most lively and poetical objects, had to submit to a colder kind of nomen-



clature at the hands of these poets. The sun obtained the classic appellation of Phœbus. The flowers could not be alluded to otherwise than as the offspring of the goddess Flora; the north-wind was personified under the doubly freezing epithet of Boreas; and a voyage could not be performed, unless by special favour of Neptune and his Tritons.

Dryden had some contemporaries of considerable poetical reputation in their own day, but, with a few exceptions, now almost forgotten. It happens that four of them were earls. The Earl of Rochester, celebrated for his profligacy and wit, displayed considerable talent without producing any one poem of distinguished merit. The Earl of Roscommon was a smooth and elegant versifier. The Earl of Halifax, an eminent historical personage, wrote a few occasional pieces, which are generally admitted into the larger collections of English poetry. The nautical ballad, *To all you Ladies now at Land*, by the Earl of Dorset, remains as the only worthy poetical memorial of a very amiable nobleman, and munificent patron of poets. Notwithstanding its conceits, it never fails to please. There is something, however, still better in the character which has been drawn of this noble author; 'If one turns,' says Horace Walpole, 'to the authors of the last age for the character of this lord, one meets with nothing but encomiums on his wit and good nature. He was the finest gentleman in the voluptuous court of Charles II., and in the gloomy one of King William. He had as much wit as his first master, or his contemporaries Buckingham and Rochester, without the royal want of feeling, the Duke's want of principles, or the Earl's want of thought. The latter said with astonishment, "that he did not know how it was, but Lord Dorset might do anything, and yet was never to blame. It was not that he was free from the failings of humanity, but he had the tenderness of it too, which made every body excuse whom every body loved."' "

## DRAMATISTS.

The stage was supported during this period by Davenant, Dryden, Wycherly, Otway, and a few others. The first of these individuals, as already mentioned, was allowed to write and act plays during the latter years of the Commonwealth. At the restoration of the monarchy, the theatre was also restored, and with new lustre, though less decency. There were now two principal playhouses in London, one of which contained a company under the patronage of the king, (thence called the King's Servants,) while the other was patronised in like manner by the Duke of York. Amidst other improvements in the management of the stage, female players, and moveable scenes, were now introduced; and, as it was deemed a mark of loyalty to attend dramatic performances, there was no want of encouragement for the two houses. During the first ten years after the Restoration, the favourite tragedies were of a kind called heroic or rhyming plays, for which the taste and the model had been brought together from France by the returning court; they referred solely to very elevated historical characters, and were written in an inflated metaphysical style, as if intended to represent a superior sort of human nature; and all the lines terminated in rhyme. Such dramas had long been fashionable in the neighbouring country, where they were carried to their greatest height of perfection by the celebrated Racine and Corneille. The principal writer of them in England was Dryden, whose most celebrated plays of this kind are, *The Indian Emperor*, and *The Conquest of Grenada*. Sir Robert Howard, brother-in-law to Dryden, and the Earl of Omory, were likewise writers of heroic plays, very eminent in their own day, but now quite forgotten. It is still a mystery by what means common audiences were prevailed upon to tolerate a kind of dramatic representation involving such absurdities. At length, in 1671, these dramas were exposed to so much ridicule by a burlesque play, entitled *The Rehearsal*, of which

the chief author was the Duke of Buckingham, that they were soon after banished from the stage. The subsequent tragedies of Dryden were divested of rhyme, and written in a more rational strain ; and of these, *All for Love* and *Don Sebastian* are the most celebrated. The same style was followed by other writers, and thus a return was in some measure effected to the natural taste of the preceding era. But no tragedy of this period, not even those of Dryden, has taken such hold of the stage as the *Venice Preserved* of THOMAS OTWAY, which appeared in the year 1682. Otway, who died soon after, at the age of thirty-four, was the son of a clergyman, and by profession a player and a poet, though unsuccessful in both capacities. After a life spent in the utmost poverty, degradation, and wretchedness, he is said to have died in consequence of eating, when almost famished, a roll which had been given to him in charity. Out of ten plays written by this unfortunate author, *Venice Preserved* is the only one now in repute ; it exhibits very successfully some of the darker and more violent passions of human nature, beautifully relieved and contrasted with the sorrows of an unoffending and virtuous female.

The comedies of this period are as remarkable for their representations of the lowest scenes of debauchery as the tragedies were at first distinguished for their high-flown dignity. Previously to the Commonwealth, the impurity of the comic productions of Beaumont and Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, was in the course of being somewhat repressed ; and, if decency had not fallen into contempt through the patronage conferred on it by the enemies of royalty, the theatre might have now been comparatively pure. But as the friends of the monarchy made a point of considering looseness of manners as the test of loyalty, and virtue as the characteristic of a man who was a foe to Church and State, the theatre naturally resumed, at the Restoration, all, or more than all, its former license. The comedies produced by Dryden and others are full of gross and shameless language, and turn upon events which never

occur except among men abandoned to the most detestable vices. The king, it appears, was fond of the Spanish comic drama, which abounds in profligate intrigue, plot, and surprise, carried on by means of disguises and ambuscades ; and accordingly it became the business of the English comic writers to introduce these peculiarities into their own compositions. Dryden's principal comedies are *The Spanish Friar*, *The Maiden Queen*, and *Amphitryon* ; and they are all constructed on this principle, so unfavourable to the decencies of domestic life. Next to him, the most celebrated comic writer of the period was WILLIAM WYCHERLY (1640-1715), whose *Plain Dealer* and *Country Wife* were for a long time popular plays, but are now neglected. Wycherly had some wit and power of delineating character ; but all his merits are lost in the coarse licentiousness which characterised every thing he wrote.

## PROSE-WRITERS.

The productions of this period, in the department of prose, bear a high character ; possessing much of the nervous force and originality of the preceding era, they make a nearer approach to that elegance in the choice and arrangement of words, which has since been attained in English composition. The chief writers in philosophical dissertation are Milton and Cowley (already spoken of as poets), Sidney, Temple, Thomas Burnet, and Locke ; in history, the Earl of Clarendon and Bishop Burnet ; in divinity, Barrow, Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Sherlock, South, Calamy, Baxter, and Barclay ; in miscellaneous literature, Fuller, Walton, L'Estrange, Dryden, and Tom Brown. Bunyan, author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, stands in a class by himself. Physical science, or a knowledge of nature, was at the same time cultivated with great success by the Honourable Robert Boyle, Dr Barrow, Sir Isaac Newton, and some others, whose writings, however, were chiefly

in Latin. An association of men devoted to the study of nature, which included these persons, was formed in 1662, under the appellation of the Royal Society—a proof that this branch of knowledge was beginning to attract a due share of attention.

MILTON began, at the commencement of the Civil War, to write pamphlets against the established Episcopal Church, and continued through the whole of the ensuing troublous period to devote his pen to the service of his party, even to the defence of that boldest of their measures, the execution of the king. His stern and inflexible principles, both in regard to religion and to civil government, are displayed in these essays; some of which were composed in Latin, in order that they might be read in foreign countries as well as in his own. Milton wrote a History of England, down to the time of the Norman Conquest, which does not possess much merit; a Tract in favour of the liberty of the press, distinguished by great eloquence and dignity of language; an Essay on Education, containing many striking original views; and a Treatise on Christian Doctrine (in Latin), which was not published till the year 1825. His prose writings in general refer to subjects of such temporary interest, that they are not now much read. They display, however, much of the sublime and ethereal spirit of the man, and might be referred to for passages of the utmost poetical excellence.

The prose works of COWLEY extend but to sixty folio pages, and consist chiefly of philosophical essays. It is allowed that he writes with more natural ease, and is therefore more successful, in prose than in verse.

The Civil War naturally directed the minds of many philosophical men to the subject of civil government; in which it seemed desirable that some fixed truths might be arrived at, as a means of preventing future contests of the same kind. Neither at that time nor since has it been found possible to lay down a theory of government to which all mankind might subscribe; but the period

under our notice nevertheless produced some political works of very great merit. The *Leviathan* of Hobbes, which we have found it convenient to allude to in an earlier section, was the most distinguished work on the monarchical side of the question; while the *Oceana* of Sir James Harrington, published soon after the accession of Cromwell to supreme power, and some of the treatises of Milton, are the best works in favour of the republican doctrines. ALGERNON SIDNEY, who was executed in December 1683, upon a groundless charge of high treason, wrote *Discourses on Government*, which were not published till fifteen years after his death. They are chiefly designed to show the necessity of a balance between the popular and the monarchical parts of a mixed government, and have obviously a particular reference to the political evils of his own time, to which, unfortunately, he was himself a victim.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE (1628–1698), who held several important offices during the reign of Charles II., and was one of the few eminent men of that period who preserved both public and private virtue, wrote various memoirs, letters, and miscellanies, upon subjects of morality, philosophy, and criticism. They have been frequently printed, and are still admired. Sir William was the first patron of the celebrated Jonathan Swift. DR THOMAS BURNET published, in 1680, a work of considerable magnitude, entitled *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, which presents a conjectural account of the geological formation of this planet and all its various vicissitudes. The work is totally worthless in a scientific view, from its want of a basis of ascertained facts; but it abounds in fine composition and magnificent imagery. The same learned person published various other works of a theological character, which are considered as in some measure at variance with revelation. He died in 1715.

The greatest philosophical writer of the period was JOHN LOCKE (1632–1704), who was originally reared for the profession of medicine, but spent the most part of his

life in studious retirement. Locke was not only a man of extraordinary ability, but of singularly amiable character, and perfect simplicity of manners. His principal work is the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, published in 1690; the chief peculiarity of which, as distinguishing it from other works on the mental faculties, is, that, rejecting the doctrine which presumes men to have ideas born with them, to be in time developed, it endeavours to show that the senses and the power of reflection are the only sources of what we know. Mr Locke also wrote a treatise on *Toleration*, of which he borrowed the plan from Jeremy Taylor; an essay on *Education*; and *Two Treatises on Civil Government*, the design of which was to defend the condition of affairs as settled by the Revolution. All these works contain views much in advance of the age in point of liberality, and add to the reputation of the author. As a specimen of the philosophical writing of the period, we give Locke's notions respecting

#### PRACTICE AND HABIT.

We are born with faculties and powers capable of almost anything, such at least as would carry us farther than can be easily imagined; but it is only the exercise of those powers which gives us ability and skill in any thing, and leads us toward perfection.

A middle-aged ploughman will scarce ever be brought to the carriage and language of a gentleman, though his body be as well-proportioned, and his joints as supple, and his natural parts not any way inferior. The legs of a dancing-master, and the fingers of a musician, fall as it were naturally, without thought or pains, into regular and admirable motions. Bid them change their parts, and they will in vain endeavour to produce like motions in the members not used to them, and it will require length of time and long practice to attain but some degrees of a like ability. What incredible and astonishing actions do we find rope-dancers and tumblers bring their bodies to; not but sundry in almost all manual arts are as wonderful; but I name those which the world takes notice of for such, because on that very account they give money to see them. All these acquired notions, beyond the reach and almost the conception of unpractised spectators, are nothing but the mere effects of use and industry in

men, whose bodies have nothing peculiar in them from those of the amazed lookers on.

As it is in the body, so it is in the mind, practice makes it what it is; and most even of those excellencies which are looked on as natural endowments, will be found, when examined into more narrowly, to be the product of exercise, and to be raised to that pitch only by repeated actions. Some men are remarked for pleasantness in raillery; others for apologues and apposite diverting stories. This is apt to be taken for the effect of pure nature, and that the rather, because it is not got by rules; and those who excel in either of them, never purposely set themselves to the study of it as an art to be learnt. But yet it is true, that at first some lucky hit which took with somebody, and gained him commendation, encouraged him to try again; inclined his thoughts and endeavours that way, till he insensibly got a facility in it without perceiving how; and that is attributed wholly to nature, which was more the effect of use and practice. I do not deny that natural disposition may often give the first rise to it; but that never carries a man far without use and exercise; and it is practice alone that brings the powers of the mind, as well as those of the body, to their perfection. Many a good poetic vein is buried under a trade, and never produces any thing for want of improvement. We see the ways of discourse and reasoning are very different, even concerning the same matter, at court and in the university. And he that will go from Westminster Hall to the Exchange, will find a different genius and turn in their ways of talking; and one cannot think that all whose lot fell in the city, were born with different parts from those who were bred at the university or inns of court. To what purpose all this, but to shew that the difference so observable in men's understandings and parts, does not arise so much from the natural faculties, as acquired habits. He would be laughed at who should go about to make a fine dancer out of a country hedger at past fifty. And he will not have much better success who shall endeavour, at that age, to make a man reason well, or speak handsomely, who has never been used to it, though you should lay before him a collection of all the best precepts of logic or oratory. No body is made any thing by hearing of rules, or laying them up in his memory; practice must settle the habit of doing, without reflecting on the rule; and you may as well hope to make a good painter or musician extempore by a lecture and instruction in the arts of music and painting, as a coherent thinker, or strict reasoner, by a set of rules, shewing him wherein right reasoning consists.

This being so that defects and weakness in men's understandings, as well as other faculties, come from want of a right use of



their own minds, I am apt to think the fault is generally mislaid upon nature, and there is often a complaint of want of parts when the fault lies in the want of a due improvement of them. We see men frequently dexterous and sharp enough in making a bargain, who, if you reason with them about matters of religion, appear perfectly stupid.

The period under review, and the reign which preceded it, were singularly fortunate in historians. The events of the civil war were commemorated with masterly ability by EDWARD HYDE, Earl of Clarendon, Lord Chancellor of England; while those which occurred between that time and the peace of Utrecht, in the reign of Queen Anne, found an equally able historian in GILBERT BURNET, Bishop of Salisbury. Hyde (1608-1674) rose to distinction by the law, was a minister of Charles I. at the commencement of the war, and accompanied Charles II. in his exile during the period of the Commonwealth. He enjoyed the office of Lord Chancellor from 1660 to 1687, when, having lost the royal favour, he retired to France, and occupied himself in the composition of his *History of the Rebellion* (for such was the epithet bestowed by the royalists upon the civil war), which, however, was not published till the reign of Queen Anne. This great work, which usually occupies six volumes, is not written in the studied manner of modern historical compositions, but in an easy flowing conversational style; and it is generally esteemed for the lively descriptions which the author gives, from his own knowledge and observation, of his most eminent contemporaries. The events are narrated with that freshness and minuteness which only one concerned in them could have attained; but some allowance must be made, in judging of the characters and the transactions described, for the political prejudices of the author, which were those of a moderate and virtuous royalist. The work of Burnet (1643-1715), which bears the title of *A History of my own Times*, gives an outline of the events of the Civil War and Commonwealth, and a full narration of all that took place from the Restoration

to the year 1713, during which period the author advanced from his seventeenth to his seventieth year. Burnet was the son of a Scottish advocate of reputation, and nephew to Johnston of Warriston, one of the principal popular leaders of the civil war in Scotland. After entering life as a clergyman of his native church, he removed to a benefice in London, where, partly by his talents and partly through forward and officious habits, he rendered himself the confidant of many high political persons. Exiled by the Stuarts, he became serviceable in Holland to the Prince of Orange, accompanied the expedition which brought about the Revolution, and was rewarded with the bishopric of Salisbury. Under various circumstances, Burnet had personally known the conspicuous characters of a whole century, and penetrated most of the state secrets of a period nearly as long. All these he has exhibited in his work, with a felicity not inferior to Clarendon, though an allowance is also required to be made in his case for political prejudices. Burnet wrote many other books in history, biography, and theology. His *History of the Reformation of the Church of England* is the standard work upon the subject.

The Church of England has at no period produced so many great divines as during that now under notice. Barrow, Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Sherlock, and South, who flourished during this era, were not only eminent preachers in their own day, but have since continued to stand in the very first rank of excellence as writers in theology. DR. ISAAC BARROW (1630-1677) devoted himself in early life to natural or experimental science, in which he attained great celebrity before he became a clergyman. Having taken orders in 1660, he successively occupied several high official situations in the University of Cambridge, of which he was Vice-Chancellor at the time of his death. It was only during a few of his latter years, that he applied himself to those theological studies by which he was destined to be afterwards famous. His works of this kind were published after his death in three folio

volumes, and chiefly consist of sermons, which are remarkable for justness of thought, and an elegant copiousness of language. One expression of Dr Barrow is so forcibly expressed, that it will hardly leave any memory—‘A strait line is the shortest in morals as well as in geometry.’ JOHN TILLOTSON (1630–1694), who rose through several gradations of clerical rank to be Archbishop of Canterbury, left his sermons as the sole property with which he was able to endow his widow. On account of his great celebrity as a divine, they were purchased by a bookseller for no less than two thousand five hundred guineas. They have ever since been admired as models of correct and elegant composition in the department of literature to which they belong. EDWARD STILLINGFLEET (1635–1699) distinguished himself in very early life by his writings in defence of religion and of the Church. His abilities as a writer caused him to be raised in 1689 to the dignity of Bishop of Winchester. Fifty of his sermons, published after his death, bear a high character. WILLIAM SHERLOCK, Dean of St Paul's (1641–1707), was chiefly distinguished in his lifetime for his writings in controversial theology, which were deemed somewhat inconsistent with the doctrines of the established Church. His *Practical Discourse concerning Death*, published in 1690, was admired, however, as an excellent treatise on a general religious subject. ROBERT SOUTH (1633–1716), the *wittiest* of English divines, was the author of six volumes of sermons, which continue to rank among the standard productions of the English Church. Dr South was one of the most eminent of those clergymen who, in the reign of Queen Anne, maintained what are called *high church principles*; that is to say, defended the ancient privileges and doctrines of the Church against every attempt at reducing or altering them. It is very creditable to the Church of England, that, during a period remarkable for an almost universal profligacy, she produced the five divines here enumerated, who, over and above all regard to their  
were men of the highest personal excellence.

During the same period, some writers of great eminence appeared among those bodies of Protestant Christians, who did not conform to the rules of the Established Church. The Presbyterian body may be said to have produced EDMUND CALAMY (1600–1666), whose influence as a preacher during the civil war was very great, and some of whose sermons still remain in estimation; and RICHARD BAXTER (1615–1691), also celebrated as a preacher, and as the author of two popular religious works, entitled *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, and the *Call to the Unconverted*, besides many other publications of a theological, devotional, or controversial kind. The latter individual would be remarkable, if in no other respect, as an uncommon example of literary industry; for he wrote, in all, four folios, seventy-three quartos, and forty-nine octavos. ROBERT BARCLAY (1648–1690), a country gentleman of Kincardineshire, in Scotland, distinguished himself by his able writings in defence of the religious society called Quakers, whose principles were at this period held in dread and contempt by all other bodies of Christians. His *Apology* for this sect, which appeared in 1676 in Latin, and in English two years after, was a learned and methodical book, very different from what the world expected on such a subject; and it was therefore read with avidity, not only in Britain, but on the Continent. Its most remarkable theological feature is the attempt to prove that there is an internal light in man, which is better fitted than even the Scriptures to guide him aright in religious matters. The dedication to King Charles II. has always been particularly admired for its simple and manly freedom of style, and for the pathos of its allusion to his Majesty's own early troubles, as a reason for his extending mercy and favour to the persecuted Quakers: 'Thou hast tasted,' says Barclay, 'of prosperity and adversity; thou knowest what it is to be banished thy native country, to be over-ruled, as well as to rule and sit upon the throne; and, being oppressed,

thou hast reason to know how hateful the oppressor is both to God and man.'

It is proper here to notice JOHN BUNYAN (1628-1688), a lay preacher of the sect called Baptists, and whose religious romance, entitled *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is one of the most remarkable books in the language. Bunyan was originally a poor, uneducated, and profligate man, by profession a tinker or mender of metal utensils; but by degrees he acquired a sense of religion, and the ability to read and write. Being imprisoned at the Restoration for unauthorized preaching, he employed himself partly in writing pious works, and partly in making tagged laces for the support of his family. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, produced under these extraordinary circumstances, has since gone through innumerable editions, and been translated into most European languages. Its object is to give an allegorical account of the life of a Christian, his difficulties, temptations, and ultimate triumph; and this is done with such skill and poetical effect, that the book, though upon the most serious of subjects, is read by children with as much pleasure as the fictions written professedly for their amusement. Among Bunyan's other works, his *Holy War*, and *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, are the most distinguished.

It will have been observed, that we have hitherto spoken chiefly of poets, dramatists, divines, and philosophical and historical writers, who, in our own age, are only a portion of the class of literary men. The reason is, that hardly any other class of authors, at least none of any merit, existed before this time. There were, for instance, no writers of novels, of criticism, of biography, or of any kind of miscellaneous literature, such as now fills our newspapers and magazines. It was not then so easy as it is now, for men to transform their thoughts into print, and therefore, when any one contemplated becoming an author, he generally waited till he should be able to present a book of some importance. About the period at

which we are now arrived, the operations of the mind and of the press began to display more alacrity, and there arose a few men of talent, who would condescend to write upon what were considered inferior subjects. These we treat as miscellaneous writers.

THOMAS FULLER (1608-1661), a divine of the Established Church, was the author of one of the earliest biographical works of note in the language; it bears the title of a *History of the Worthies of England*, and was published the year after his death. Fuller also wrote a Church history and some other works. His *Worthies*, though containing much gossip on which dependence cannot be placed, has preserved some valuable biographical information, which would have otherwise been lost. He was himself a very singular person, being able to repeat five hundred unconnected words, after hearing them only twice, or to give an account of all the tradesmen's signs on the leading thoroughfare of the city of London, after passing through it. ISAAC WALTON (1593-1683), originally a sempster in London, but who retired from business on a competency in his fiftieth year, enjoys considerable celebrity on account of his work entitled *The Complete Angler, or Contemplative Man's Recreation*, which was published in 1653. It is written in the form of dialogues, and not only contains instructions for the sport, but describes, with great simplicity and feeling, the rural scenes and pleasures to which the art is apt to introduce its votaries. There is also in the work a tone of benevolence and morality, which adds greatly to its value. Besides this volume, which is still much in the hands of the public, Walton wrote the lives of Dr Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Sheldon Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mr George Herbert, which are much admired for their simple, though somewhat quaint eloquence. JOHN EVELYN (1620-1706), a gentleman of easy fortune and the most amiable personal character, distinguished himself by several scientific works. His *Sylva*, a discourse upon forest trees, published in 1664, was the cause of the plant-

ing of an immense quantity of oak timber, which, a century after, proved of the greatest service to the nation, in the construction of ships of war. *Terra*, a discourse on the earth, with a regard to the rearing of plants, appeared in 1675; and the venerable author also wrote a treatise on medals. Evelyn was one of the first in this country to treat gardening and planting scientifically; and his grounds at Sayes Court, near Deptford, where he resided, were greatly admired, on account of the number of foreign plants which he reared in them, and the fine order in which they were kept. A *Diary*, written by this excellent person, and published in 1818, is much valued for the picture which it gives of the state of society during the latter part of the seventeenth century. ROGER L'ESTRANGE (1616-1704) was the first individual in England who acquired notoriety as an occasional political writer; from the Restoration to the time of his death, he was constantly occupied in the editing of newspapers and writing of pamphlets, generally in behalf of the Court, from which he at last received the honour of knighthood. He also translated *Æsop's Fables* and the works of *Josephus*. Sir Roger was so anxious to accommodate his style to the taste of the common people, that few of his writings could now be read with any pleasure. The class whom he addressed were only beginning to be readers, and as yet relished nothing but the meanest ideas, presented in the meanest language.

Of DRYDEN's prose compositions, which have been published separately in four volumes, the most remarkable are his *Discourse on Dramatic Poetry*, and the *Prefaces* and *Dedications* to his various poetical works. These are the first easy and graceful essays upon the lighter departments of literature which appeared in England. Dr Johnson describes them as airy, animated, and vigorous. In the *Discourse*, he has drawn characters of his dramatic predecessors, which are allowed to be unsurpassed, in spirit and precision, by any later or more laborious criticisms.

Writers named D'URFEY and TOM BROWN, entertained the public in the reign of William III. with occasional whimsical compositions both in prose and verse, which are now only valued as conveying some notion of the taste and manners of the time. Brown died in 1704, and his works were published three years after, under the title of *Dialogues, Essays, Declamations, Satires, and Amusements*.

It was not till the beginning of the period under notice, and fully twenty years after the death of Bacon, that natural science was cultivated with any marked success. The first eminent name which occurs in the history of this useful department of study, is that of the Honourable ROBERT BOYLE, a younger son of the Earl of Cork, and a native of Ireland. Mr Boyle was born in 1626, and spent several years of his youth in foreign travel. About the close of the reign of Charles I., while most men were engrossed with political and religious revolutions, this amiable student became the centre of a little circle of gentlemen, who preferred seeking their own amusement and the good of mankind in scientific inquiries, and who, in more quiet times, formed themselves into what is called the Royal Society. He himself commenced a series of experiments in chemistry, and became the inventor of that well-known instrument, the air-pump. Previously to his death in 1691, he had published no fewer than forty-one different treatises, chiefly on subjects in natural philosophy. Among the associates of Boyle, Dr Isaac Barrow was one of the most eminent. His works in science would have rendered him famous, although he had never been known as a divine. SIR ISAAC NEWTON (1642-1727), who outshone all that went before him, and all that have come after him, was only a young student at the time when Boyle and Barrow were in the height of their reputation. It was the fortune of Newton to erect, upon the basis of geometry, a new system of philosophy, by which the operations of nature were for the first time properly elucidated; the motions of the vast orbs composing the solar



system being shown by him to depend upon rules that were equally applicable to the smallest particles of matter. The work in which he explained this system was written in Latin, and published in 1687, under a title which in English means *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. It is remarkable that all these three eminent cultivators of natural science wrote also upon religious subjects. Boyle endeavoured in more than one treatise to prove that religion and science were reconcilable, and published a tract against swearing. Sir Isaac Newton wrote *Some Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St John*, which were published after his death.

During this period Scotland produced many eminent men, but scarcely any who attempted composition in the English language. The difference between the common speech of the one country, and that which was used in the other, had been widening ever since the days of Chaucer and James I., but particularly since the accession of James VI. to the English throne; the Scotch remaining stationary or declining, while the English was advancing in refinement of both structure and pronunciation. Accordingly, except the works of Drummond of Hawthornden, who had studied and acquired the language of Drayton and Jonson, there did not appear in Scotland any estimable specimen of vernacular prose or poetry, between the time of Maitland and Montgomery and that of Sir GEORGE MACKENZIE, Lord Advocate under Charles II. and James II. (1636-1691), who seems to have been the only learned man of his time that maintained an acquaintance with the lighter departments of contemporary English literature. Sir George was the friend of Dryden, by whom he is mentioned with great respect, and he himself composed poetry, which, if it has no other merit, is at least in pure English, and appears to have been fashioned after the best models of the time. He also wrote some moral essays, which possess the same merits. The only other compositions bearing a resemblance to English, which

appeared in Scotland during the seventeenth century, were controversial pamphlets in politics and divinity, now generally forgotten.

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#### FIFTH PERIOD.

REIGNS OF WILLIAM III., ANNE, AND GEORGE I.  
[1689-1727.]

THE thirty-eight years embraced by these reigns produced a class of writers in prose and poetry, who, during the whole of the eighteenth century, were deemed the best, or nearly the best, that the country had ever known. The central period of twelve years which compose the reign of Anne, (1702-14,) was, indeed, usually styled the *Augustan Era of English Literature*, on account of its supposed resemblance in intellectual opulence to the reign of the Emperor Augustus. This opinion has not been followed or confirmed in the present age. The praise due to good sense, and a correct and polished style, is allowed to the prose-writers, and that due to a felicity in painting artificial life, is awarded to the poets; but modern critics seem to have agreed to pass over these qualities as of secondary moment, and to hold in greater estimation the writings of the times preceding the Restoration, and of our own day, as being more boldly original, both in style and in thought, more imaginative, and more sentimental. The *Edinburgh Review* appears to state the prevailing sentiment in the following sentences—‘Speaking generally of that generation of authors, it may be said that, as poets, they had no force or greatness of fancy, no pathos and no enthusiasm, and, as philosophers, no comprehensiveness, depth, or originality. They are sagacious, no doubt, neat, clear, and reasonable; but for the most part, cold, timid, and superficial.’ The same critic represents it as their chief praise that they corrected the

indecenty, and polished the pleasantry and sarcasm, of the vicious school introduced at the Restoration. 'Writing,' he continues, 'with infinite good sense, and great grace and vivacity, and, above all, writing for the first time in a tone that was peculiar to the upper ranks of society, and upon subjects that were almost exclusively interesting to them, they naturally figured as the most accomplished, fashionable, and perfect writers which the world had ever seen, and made the wild, luxuriant, and humble sweetness of our earlier authors, appear rude and untutored in the comparison.' While there is general truth in these remarks, it must at the same time be observed, that the age produced several writers, who, each in his own line, may be called extraordinary. Satire, expressed in forcible and copious language, was certainly carried to its utmost pitch of excellence by Swift. The poetry of elegant and artificial life was exhibited, in a perfection never since attained, by Pope. The art of describing the manners, and discussing the morals of the passing age, was practised for the first time, and with unrivalled felicity, by Addison. And, with all the licentiousness of Congreve and Farquhar, it may be fairly said that English comedy was in their hands what it had never been before, and has scarcely in any instance been since.

#### POETS.

The gay epigrammatic kind of versification, introduced from France at the Restoration, was brought to perfection during the reign of William III. by MATTHEW PRIOR (1664-1721), an individual of obscure birth, but who, by means of his abilities, rose to considerable state employments. Prior was matchless for his tales and light occasional verses, though these, as well as others of his compositions, are degraded by their licentiousness. He wrote one serious poem of considerable length, called *Solomon, or the Vanity of the World*, and a pastoral tale

entitled *Henry and Emma*. As a specimen of his neat and lively manner, and of a kind of versification very popular at this time, we may give his mock epitaph on a couple who seem to have passed through life in a very unostentatious manner.

## JACK AND JOAN.

Interr'd beneath this marble stone,  
Lie sauntering Jack and idle Joan.  
While rolling threescore years and one  
Did round the globe their courses run ;  
If human things went ill or well ;  
If changing empires rose or fell ;  
The morning past, the evening came,  
And found this couple just the same.  
They walk'd and eat, good folks : What then ?  
Why then they walk'd and ate again ;  
They soundly slept the night away ;  
They did just nothing all the day :  
Nor sister either had nor brother ;  
They seemed just tallied for each other.  
Their Moral and Oeconomy  
Most perfectly they made agree ;  
Each virtue kept its proper ground,  
Nor trespass'd on the other's ground.  
Nor fame nor censure they regarded ;  
They neither punish'd nor rewarded.  
He cared not what the footmen did ;  
Her maids she neither praised nor chid :  
So every servant took his course,  
And, bad at first, they all grew worse.  
Slothful disorder fill'd his stable,  
And sluttish plenty deck'd her table.  
Their beer was strong ; their wine was port ;  
Their meal was large ; their grace was short.  
They gave the poor the remnant meat,  
Just when it grew not fit to eat.  
They paid the church and parish rate,  
And took, but read not, the receipt ;  
For which they claim'd their Sunday's due,  
Of slumbering in an upper pew.  
No man's defects sought they to know :  
So never made themselves a foe.  
No man's good deeds did they commend ;  
So never raised themselves a friend.

Nor cherish'd they relations poor ;  
 That might decrease their present store ;  
 Nor barn nor house did they repair ;  
 That might oblige their future heir.  
 They neither added nor confounded ;  
 They neither wanted nor abounded.  
 Nor tear nor smile did they employ  
 At news of public grief or joy.  
 When bells were rung and bonfires made,  
 If ask'd, they ne'er denied their aid :  
 Their jug was to the ringers carried,  
 Whoever either died or married.  
 Their billet at the fire was found,  
 Whoever was deposed or crown'd.  
 Nor good, nor bad, nor fools, nor wise ;  
 They would not learn, nor could advise :  
 Without love, hatred, joy, or fear,  
 They led—a kind of—as it were :  
 Nor wish'd, nor cared, nor laugh'd, nor cried :  
 And so they lived, and so they died.

The reign of William, though it includes the declining years of Dryden, may be considered as a short and dull period of transition between the style of that great poet and the style of Pope, who followed him. During this era, besides Dryden and Prior, poetry was cultivated by Addison, Garth, and Blackmore ; men, it may be said, who were sufficient to keep alive the flame, but not to give it any additional fervour or brilliancy. JOSEPH ADDISON (1672–1719), the son of a clergyman, and educated at Oxford, entered life as a literary partisan of the Whigs, who possessed the reins of government during nearly the whole period under our notice. His principal poems are congratulatory pieces on the triumphs of the British army abroad—translations from the Roman poets—and devotional pieces. His correct, pious, and generally amiable character, are conspicuous in his metrical compositions ; but they do not, in any great degree, display the higher qualities of poetry, and are now not much regarded. SAMUEL GARTH, born of a good family in Yorkshire, and who became a favourite physician among the Whigs during the reign of William, published

in 1697 a mock-heroic composition, entitled the *Dispensary*, referring to a dispute in the College of Physicians, respecting the commencement of a charitable institution, in which the poet strongly advocated the cause of benevolence. This work long held its place in our popular literature, on account of its wit and neatness of expression. Garth wrote a few other poems, chiefly upon occasional subjects. SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE, another popular Whig physician of this era, published, in 1695, the heroic poem of *Prince Arthur*, in ten books,—in 1697, another heroic poem entitled *King Arthur*, in twelve books,—and in 1713, a philosophical poem called *Creation*, in seven books; works which enjoyed great reputation in their own day, but have long been condemned as flat, inelegant, and wearisome. The admiration which they once enjoyed, is not wholly to be attributed to the low state of public taste, but in a great measure to the spirit of party. Blackmore being a zealous Whig, and a friend of the King, who knighted him, it became a kind of political duty with one set of people to read and praise his works, while another heartily despised them. At length his dulness tired even his friends. His *Eliza*, a heroic poem in ten books, which appeared in 1705,—his *Nature of Man*, a philosophical poem in three books, published in 1711,—his *King Alfred*, a fourth heroic poem, in twelve books, published in 1723,—and a great variety of minor pieces, both in prose and poetry, fell still-born from the press. He died at an advanced age in 1729.

When ALEXANDER POPE, about the year 1709, first appeared conspicuously before the literary world, poetry had sunk into a comparatively languid condition. This celebrated man, the son of a linen-draper in London, of the Catholic persuasion, was born in 1688. He was reared at a sequestered villa in Windsor Forest, to which his father had retired with a competence; and at twelve years of age, he composed some verses of considerable merit. The extreme weakness and deformity of his per-

son inclined him to a studious life; and as he did not require to apply to any profession for his support, he was encouraged by his father to become a poet. His principal efforts in boyhood were translations from the Roman poets; a kind of literary labour which was never more extensively cultivated than during this period. At sixteen he wrote some *Pastorals*, and the beginning of a poem entitled *Windsor Forest*, which, when published a few years afterwards, obtained high praise for melody of versification. In his early years, he had much intercourse with a Mr Cromwell, who is described as having been a mixture of the pedant and beau; and from this individual he acquired many habits of thinking and expression, by no means amiable,—in particular, a sarcastic way of treating the female sex. At twenty-one, he wrote his *Essay on Criticism*, which excited universal admiration by the comprehensiveness of thought, the justness of the remarks, and the happiness of illustration, which were then attributed to it, though its merits in these respects have been held somewhat lower since. Of this poem it may be said that it at once describes, and is a very fair specimen of, what the wits of Queen Anne's reign were most captivated by—an epigrammatic turn of thought, and a happy appropriateness of expression. The following is one of the most admired passages:—

But most by numbers judge a poet's song;  
 And smooth or rough with them is right or wrong;  
 In the bright muse though thousand charms conspire,  
 Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire.  
 Who haunt Parnassus but to please the ear,  
 Not mend their minds; as some to church repair, }  
 Not for the doctrine, but the music there.  
 These equal syllables alone require,  
 Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;  
 While expletives their feeble aid do join,  
 And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:  
 While they ring round the same unvaried chimes  
 With sure returns of still expected rhymes;  
 Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze,'  
 In the next line it 'whispers through the trees:'

If crystal streams ' with pleasing murmurs creep,'  
 The reader's threatened, not in vain, with ' sleep :'  
 Then, at the last and only couplet fraught  
 With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,  
 A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
*Which like a wounded snake drags its slow length along.*

The dexterity with which the passages here marked in italics were made to exemplify the faults which they condemned, was greatly prized by the readers of those days ; and it is allowed that these deformities were thenceforward banished from our literature. In 1711, when only twenty-three years of age, Pope wrote the two most beautiful of all his original poems—*The Rape of the Lock*, and the *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*. The former of these is a heroic-comical poem in five short cantos, written originally as a mere piece of pleasantry for the amusement of a private circle, and referring to no other incident than the cutting away of a lock of hair from the tresses of a young lady, by a gentleman who desired it as a keepsake. In its original form, the poem described this incident with comparative brevity and simplicity ; but the poet afterwards introduced into it what was called *machinery*,—namely, a set of supernatural beings, who, like the heathen deities in the *Iliad* and *Æneid*, were employed in developing the plot and bringing it to a conclusion. The *machinery* adopted by Pope consisted of the sylphs and gnomes, good and evil genii, who were supposed by the Rosicrucian philosophers to direct the proceedings of human beings ; and no kind of creatures could have been better adapted to enter into a story compounded, as this is, of airy fashionable frivolities. The lady whose loss gave rise to the poem, was Miss Arabella Fermor, whom Pope denominates Belinda ; the lover was a Lord Petre ; and the object of the poem was to suppress the quarrel which his lordship's felony had occasioned, not only between himself and his mistress, but between their respective families. The main incident is described as taking place at the tea-table.



## THE SEVERING OF THE LOCK.

For lo ! the board with cups and spoons is crowned,  
The berries crackle and the mill turns round.  
On shining altars of Japan they raise  
The silver lamp ; the fiery spirits blaze.  
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,  
While China's earth receives the smoking tide.  
At once they gratify their scent and taste,  
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.  
Straight hover round the fair her airy band ;  
Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned ;  
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes displayed,  
Trembling and conscious of the rich brocade.  
Coffee, which makes the politician wise,  
And see through all things with his half-shut eyes,  
Sent up new vapours to the baron's brain,  
New stratagems the radiant Lock to gain.  
Ah cease, rash youth ! desist ere 'tis too late,  
Fear the just gods, and think of Scylla's fate !  
Chang'd to a bird, and sent to flit in air,  
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair !  
But when to mischief mortals bend their will,  
How soon they find fit instruments of ill !  
Just then Clarissa drew with tempting grace  
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case :  
So ladies in romance assist their knight,  
Present the spear and arm him for the fight.  
He takes the gift with reverence, and extends  
The little engine on his fingers'-ends ;  
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,  
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.  
Swift to the Lock a thousand sprites repair,  
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair,  
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear ;  
Thrice she drew back and thrice the foe drew near.  
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought  
The close recesses of the virgin's thought ;  
As on the nosegay in her breast reclin'd,  
He watch'd th' ideas rising in her mind.  
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,  
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.  
Amazed, confused, he found his power expired,  
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.  
The peer now spreads the glittering forceps wide,  
T' inclose the lock ; now joins it, to divide,

Ev'n then, before the fatal engine closed,  
 A wretched sylph too fondly interposed ;  
 Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,  
 (But airy substance soon unites again :)  
 The meeting points the sacred hair dis sever  
 From the fair head, for ever and for ever !

Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,  
 And screams of terror rend th' affrighted skies.  
 Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,  
 When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their last !  
 Or when rich China vessels, fall'n from high,  
 In glittering dust and painted fragments lie.

The *Rape of the Lock* contains more fancy than any of the other poems of its author, though it is exerted only on ludicrous and artificial objects. His *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*, written at the same time, and his *Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard*, composed a few years later, are the only poems of Pope which contain much passion or deep feeling. The heroine of the former, whose name has not been ascertained, is said to have destroyed herself in France, in consequence of her affections being blighted by the tyranny of an uncle ; and the following are some of the more pathetic couplets in which her loss is deplored :—

What can atone, oh ever-injured shade,  
 Thy fate unpitied, and thy rites unpaid ?  
 No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear,  
 Pleased thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier :  
 By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,  
 By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed.  
 By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,  
 By strangers honoured and by strangers mourned !  
 What though no friends in sable weeds appear,  
 Grieve for an hour, perhaps, then mourn a year,  
 And bear about the mockery of woe  
 To midnight dances and the public show ?  
 What though no weeping loves thy ashes grace,  
 Nor polished marble emulate thy face ?  
 What though no sacred earth allow thee room,  
 Nor hallowed dirge be muttered o'er thy tomb ?  
 Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be dressed,  
 And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast :

There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,  
There the first roses of the year shall blow ;  
While angels with their silver wings o'ershade  
The ground now sacred by thy relics made.

So, peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,  
What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame.  
A heap of dust alone remains of thee ;  
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be.

When Pope, in 1713, had reached the age of twenty-five, he found his reputation as a poet completely established. Being anxious to increase the small competence which he enjoyed through his father, he resolved to turn his fame to account by a translation of the *Iliad*, which he justly supposed would prove a profitable undertaking. The publication took place at intervals, but was completed in 1720, when the translator was only thirty-two. Pope's *Iliad* is not regarded as a faithful version of the original ; it does not possess the simple majesty and unaffected grandeur of the heathen poet. Yet, while every succeeding attempt to copy these characteristics has failed, it must be allowed that Pope, in changing those qualities of the original, for his own brilliant and elaborate diction and elegance of description, has produced a most fascinating work, and one that, in all probability, will not soon lose its popularity. Pope next undertook to translate the *Odyssey*, but twelve of the books were executed by his friends, Elijah Fenton and William Broome, to whom he gave a share of the profits. The two translations realized a very large sum, considering the rate at which literary labour was usually remunerated in those days.

From about the year 1715, Pope lived in easy circumstances in a villa at Twickenham, on the Thames, where he occasionally enjoyed the society of his friends, among whom were some of the most distinguished persons of the time, especially of the Tory party. Though a man of the most brilliant intellect, he did not enjoy a good temper, which may perhaps be partly attributed to, though it cannot be excused by, his sickly and deformed person. He was so weak, notwithstanding the supremacy he had

gained in literature, as to write burlesque and satirical poems, for the purpose of throwing ridicule upon authors who possessed less ability than himself, and many of whom were too humble for notice of any kind. These attacks producing attacks in return, tended greatly to embitter a life, which is allowed, in other respects, to have exemplified many amiable virtues. His principal satirical poem is the *Dunciad*, in four books, published in 1728; a work in which there is now nothing to be seen but misdirected talent, and sentiments inconsistent with the character of a Christian author. He next composed, at the suggestion of Lord Bolingbroke, his celebrated metaphysical and moral poem, entitled an *Essay on Man*, in which he embodied, in four short epistles, a series of arguments respecting the human being, in relation to the universe, to himself, to society, and to the pursuit of happiness. Of this great performance, (published in 1733,) it is sufficient here to observe, that it gave an example of the poet's extraordinary power of managing argument in verse, and of compressing his thoughts into clauses of the most energetic brevity, as well as of expanding them into passages glittering with every poetic ornament. He afterwards published some *Imitations of the Satires and Epistles of Horace*, and *Moral Essays in four Epistles*,—poems of a satirical cast, and exhibiting many striking views of human life and character. These, with a few short occasional pieces, complete the list of his poetical works. His letters, which, at a late period of life, he collected and gave to the world, are elegant and sprightly, but too evidently written for parade, to be perfectly agreeable specimens of epistolary composition. This illustrious poet died May 30, 1744, at the age of fifty-six.

The other poets of the reigns of Anne and George I., whose names are still remembered, rank much beneath Pope. The most distinguished is JOHN GAY (1688–1732), a man of simple and amiable character, but gifted with strong powers of wit, and great knowledge of human character. His most popular poems are his *Fables*, which,

in liveliness and point, have never been matched. His mock-heroic poem in three books, entitled *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, was a very happy description of existing manners and customs; but his fame now mainly rests on *The Beggar's Opera*, produced in 1727, a play certainly very reprehensible on the score of morality, but which was so much admired for its music, and for the ridicule which it threw on the weak points of many human institutions, that it was acted sixty-three nights in succession, and has ever since continued to be a favourite with those who delight in theatrical representations. JONATHAN SWIFT, though more eminent as a prose-writer, ranks among the poets of this age; his verses are chiefly of a satirical kind, referring to passing events and characters, and, with a few exceptions, are not now much read. THOMAS TICKELL, a contributor to the *Spectator*, was an elegant versifier, with somewhat more tenderness than his contemporaries. His ballad of *Colin and Lucy* is still popular, and one of the verses, in which the lovelorn maid prognosticates her approaching end, has perhaps fixed itself in more memories than any other stanza of the period:—

I hear a voice you cannot hear,  
Which says, I must not stay;  
I see a hand you cannot see,  
Which beckons me away.

The moral tale of *The Hermit*, by THOMAS PARNELL, a native of Ireland, is another production of this age, which is still held in estimation. NICOLAS ROWE, poet-laureate to George I., and the friend of Addison, is now less known as a miscellaneous poet than as a tragic dramatist. ELIJAH FENTON wrote some sprightly verses, and, as already mentioned, assisted Pope in translating the *Odyssey*. The poems of GEORGE GRANVILLE LORD LANSDOWNE, enjoyed much notice in their day, as lively imitations of the school of the Restoration, but are now totally overlooked. The works of HUGHES, PATTISON, BROOME, YALDEN, and

SHEFFIELD DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, though still permitted to encumber the collections of British poetry, are also entirely neglected by modern readers.

The age of Pope and Gay produced only one classic Scottish poet who wrote in his native language. It has been mentioned that, from the days of Drummond of Hawthornden, Sir George Mackenzie was the only Scotsman who attempted to cultivate English literature. It may be said, with the same truth, that, from the days of Captain Montgomery, ALLAN RAMSAY was the first who wrote with success in the language more peculiarly belonging to the country. This poet was born in Lanarkshire in 1686, and entered life as a wig-maker in the city of Edinburgh, where he finally became a bookseller. The homely rhymes which had maintained an obscure existence from earlier times, and been recently practised with something like revived effect by poets named Semple and Pennycuik, were adopted and improved by Ramsay, who found farther models in the poems of Butler, Dryden, and Pope. After producing some short pieces of considerable humour, he published, in 1726, his celebrated pastoral drama of *The Gentle Shepherd*, which has become the chief prop of his reputation. This drama depicts the rustics of Scotland in their actual characters, and the language of their everyday life, and yet without any taint of vulgarity. It is full of fine cordial natural feeling, has some good descriptive passages, and turns on an event which irresistibly engages the sympathies of the reader. Ramsay also collected the popular songs of his native country, and was himself skilful in that department of poetic literature. After a very useful and honourable life, he died in 1758.

#### DRAMATISTS.

Much of the poetical and inventive power of this age was devoted to dramatic composition, then a lucrative de-

partment of literature, and one which served as well as any other, to procure for those who cultivated it the esteem of the higher orders of society.

In tragedy, the most celebrated names are those of Southerne, Lillo, Rowe, and Addison, of whom the two last were also distinguished in other branches of literature. THOMAS SOUTHERNE (1662-1746) appeared as a tragic writer in the latter part of the reign of Charles II. ; but his most successful pieces, *Isabella* and *Oroonoko*, were brought out during the period under notice. Though the former is still a favourite play, Southerne is not to be considered as a dramatic genius of a high order. He had the art, however, to make his productions much more profitable than those of his illustrious contemporary Dryden, who, being told by him that he had realized seven hundred pounds by a particular piece, remarked, 'It is six hundred more than ever I did.' An entirely novel kind of tragic composition was practised with success by GEORGE LILLO (1693-1739), a modest and respectable tradesman of the city of London. Its novelty consisted in the selection of the subject and characters from common life. In *George Barnwell*, which was founded upon a popular ballad, he represented most happily the progress of an apprentice in moral error, till a flagrant crime brings him to an ignominious death. NICOLAS ROWE (1673-1718), by profession a barrister, and the friend of Pope and Addison, was by many degrees the most eminent tragic poet of the period. His *Tamerlane*, *Fair Penitent*, and *Jane Shore*, produced between the years 1702 and 1715, are still considered as acting plays ; the last, in particular, being regularly employed to bring out the powers of the best female tragedians. It cannot be said that he possesses in a high degree the principal parts of dramatic invention, such as the nice discriminations of character, and the skilful development and varied play of passion ; but his diction is poetical, without being bombastic or affected, his versification is singularly sweet, and his plays, generally adapted to the taste of the French school, abound in

what that people call *tirades* of sentiment, given with force and elegance, and calculated to dwell on the mind. It is related of Rowe, who was of the Whig party, that he applied for patronage to the Tory minister, Harley Earl of Oxford, and being asked if he understood Spanish, conceived it to be a hint that he might expect some post for which an acquaintance with that language was necessary; he soon after waited upon the minister, to inform him that he had learned Spanish, when Lord Oxford, probably forgetting the former conversation, replied, that 'he envied him the pleasure of reading Don Quixote in the original.' The only tragedy written by ADDISON, was his *Cato*, acted in 1713; a production remarkable for the sustained elevation of its style and the correctness of its plan,—containing many speeches that make an indelible impression on the reader or hearer,—but deficient in interest of plot, and particularly tame in all the passages that refer to love. The aspirations after liberty, with which this play abounds, caused it, by a concurrence of circumstances at the time, to be well received by both the Tories and the Whigs, and it had a run of thirty-five nights. It has now almost disappeared from the stage, for which it is certainly less fitted than for private perusal. As a specimen, at once of the play itself, and of the tragic poetry of the period, may be given

## CATO'S SOLILOQUY BEFORE COMMITTING SUICIDE.

[*Cato is understood to sit in a thoughtful posture; in his hand Plato's book on the Immortality of the Soul; a drawn sword on the table beside him.*]

It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well;  
 Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
 This longing after immortality?  
 Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,  
 Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul  
 Back on herself, and startles at destruction?  
 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;  
 'Tis heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,  
 And intimates eternity to man!  
 Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful thought!



Through what variety of untry'd being,  
 Through what new scenes and changes must we pass ;  
 The wide, th' unbounded prospect, lies before me ;  
 But shadows, clouds, and darkness, rest upon it.  
 Here will I hold. If there's a power above us,  
 (And that there is all nature cries aloud  
 Through all her works,) he must delight in virtue ;  
 And that which he delights in must be happy.  
 But when ! or where !—This world was made for Cæsar.  
 I'm weary of conjectures—This must end them.

*(Laying his hand upon his sword.*

Thus am I doubly armed : my death and life,  
 My bane and antidote, are both before me :  
 This in a moment brings me to an end,  
 But this informs me I shall never die.  
 The soul, secur'd in her existence, smiles  
 At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.  
 The stars shall fade away, the sun himself  
 Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years ;  
 But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,  
 Unhurt amidst the war of elements,  
 The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

The dramatic genius of the age seems to have found a more appropriate field in comedy than in tragedy. As already mentioned, it was an age marked not so much by deep feeling or high imagination, as by an extraordinary attention to the niceties of refined and fashionable society. Hence, while the tragic poetry of the period was upon the whole more remarkable for correctness than for strong passion, nothing could excel the comedy, either for the sparkling vivacity of its diction, or the faithfulness with which the characters and incidents of polished life were represented. It is the age, more particularly, to which we must still look back for what is called the *legitimate English comedy*—that is to say, comedies in five acts, embodying generally a superior and inferior plot, and depending upon no other attractions than what the writer himself can give. This kind of play, while exhibiting hardly any resemblance to the productions of Shakspeare, Jonson, or Beaumont and Fletcher, derived regularity of design from the French theatre of the seventeenth century.

and plot and ambuscade from that of Spain. It was essentially connected with a still more lively and intriguing kind of play in two acts, called the *Farce*, of which England has produced many excellent specimens.

Decidedly the most eminent of the comic dramatists of the age was WILLIAM CONGREVE, a gentleman of Staffordshire, born in 1669, and educated in Ireland. While studying law in the Temple, in London, he began to write for the theatre, and at the age of twenty-one produced his first play, entitled *The Old Bachelor*, which was highly successful. Having experienced ministerial patronage, he was enabled to devote his talents entirely to the drama; and such was his industry, that, at the age of twenty-eight, he was the author of four plays, all of which had met with the highest approbation. Of these, one was a tragedy called *The Mourning Bride*; the names of the two best comedies were *The Double Dealer*, and *Love for Love*. The failure of a play which he afterwards produced, under the name of *The Way of the World*, caused him to abandon theatrical composition, though it is now considered as equal in merit with the rest of his comedies. In his latter years, being in easy circumstances, he became too indolent to write, and almost too proud, it is said, to acknowledge himself as an author. Congreve surpasses not only all the dramatists, but every English comic writer whatever, in wit: he lavishes this quality upon his writings only too abundantly, causing every character to speak with nearly the same brilliancy. For this and other reasons, the persons of his plays are allowed to be not very exact representations of nature. He died in 1729, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

GEORGE FARQUHAR (1678–1707), the son of a clergyman in the north of Ireland, and who was first a player and then a lieutenant in the army, was scarcely inferior to Congreve as a comic dramatist. His first play, which appeared in 1698, under the title of *Love and a Bottle*, was followed two years after by a more successful one, *The Constant Couple*, to which he soon added a sequel,

entitled *Sir Harry Wildair*. The most conspicuous character in the two latter comedies, is the person from whom the second of them takes its name—a perfect model of the easy libertine of the period. In 1703, Farquhar produced *The Inconstant*, which was followed by *The Twin Rivals*; and in 1706 appeared *The Recruiting Officer*, which is chiefly sustained by the humour of an inferior character, Sergeant Kite. Farquhar's last and best play was *The Beaux' Stratagem*, which he wrote in six weeks, under the depression of a rooted illness. This piece enjoyed a successful run, and kept large audiences in roars of laughter, while its unhappy and still youthful author was stretched on a death-bed, rendered more distressing to him by the reflection that he was about to leave two daughters unprovided for. Farquhar wrote with great ease and humour; but, though some of his plays have been acted at no remote date, there is one powerful reason for the neglect into which they have now fallen. The characters are almost without exception profligates, whose language and conduct are rather fitted to shock than to please the comparatively refined readers of the present age.

Contemporary with Congreve and Farquhar, was SIR JOHN VANBURGH, author of *The Provoked Wife*, *The Provoked Husband*, and some other plays of considerable celebrity, most of which appeared between 1697 and 1705, a period during which, perhaps, more of the standard English comedies were produced, than during any other era of three times the space. With the exception of *The Provoked Husband*, which is an admirable comedy in every respect, Vanburgh's plays, while generally marked by the same faults as those of Farquhar, possess rather less elegance. In his latter years, he became an architect, and had the honour of designing Blenheim House for the Duke of Marlborough. Another of the great comic dramatists of the period was COLLEY CIBBER, an actor (1671–1757), whose *Careless Husband*, produced in 1706, is still one of the most admired of English comedies, and who finished Vanburgh's *Provoked Husband*, by adding the unrivalled

scenes between Lord Townly and his lady. It is not necessary to enumerate the less successful efforts of this writer; but it may be mentioned that, in 1740, he published his own life, which contains a vast fund of amusing and curious information respecting the theatrical writers and actors from the reign of Charles II. downwards. His personal character was a curious mixture of good nature, vanity, and impudence, with a surprising want of self-respect. The last of the brilliant list is Susanna Freeman, better known by the name she obtained from her third husband, MRS CENTLIVRE, and supposed to have been a native of Ireland. After a life of extraordinary adventure, this lady became a regular writer for the theatres, and, besides less successful pieces, was the author of *The Busy Body*, performed in 1708; *The Wonder, a Woman keeps a Secret*, in 1714; and *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, in 1717. These pieces, though by no means pure in language or morality, are diverting from the bustle of their plots, and the liveliness of some of the characters. Marplot in the *Busy Body* is one of the most memorable portraitures in the whole range of the British drama.

As a specimen of the comedy of the era, may be given, from Farquhar's *Beaux' Stratagem*, the following

HUMOROUS SCENE AT AN INN.

*Boniface, Aimwell.*

*Bon.* This way, this way, sir.

*Aim.* You're my landlord, I suppose?

*Bon.* Yes, sir, I'm old Will Boniface; pretty well known upon this road, as the saying is.

*Aim.* O, Mr Boniface, your servant.

*Bon.* O, sir—What will your honour please to drink, as the saying is?

*Aim.* I have heard your town of Litchfield much famed for ale; I think I'll taste that.

*Bon.* Sir, I have now in my cellar ten ton of the best ale in Staffordshire: 'tis smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy; and will be just fourteen years old the fifth day of next March, old style.

*Aim.* You're very exact, I find, in the age of your ale.

*Bon.* As punctual, sir, as I am in the age of my children : I'll show you such ale.—Here, tapster ; broach number 1706, as the saying is—Sir, you shall taste my anno domini.—I have lived in Litchfield, man and boy, above eight-and-fifty years, and, I believe, have not consumed eight-and-fifty ounces of meat.

*Aim.* At a meal you mean, if one may guess by your bulk.

*Bon.* Not in my life, sir ; I have fed purely upon ale : I have eat my ale, drank my ale, and I always sleep upon my ale.

*Enter Tapster with a Tankard.*

Now, sir, you shall see—Your worship's health : [*Drinks*].—Ha ! delicious, delicious : Fancy it Burgundy, only fancy it—and 'tis worth ten shillings a quart.

*Aim.* [*Drinks*] 'Tis confounded strong.

*Bon.* Strong ! it must be so, or how would we be strong that drink it ?

*Aim.* And have you lived so long upon this ale, landlord ?

*Bon.* Eight-and-fifty years, upon my credit, sir : but it kill'd my wife, poor woman ! as the saying is.

*Aim.* How came that to pass ?

*Bon.* I don't know how, sir—she would not let the ale take its natural course, sir : she was for qualifying it every now and then with a dram, as the saying is ; and an honest gentleman, that came this way from Ireland, made her a present of a dozen bottles of usquebaugh—but the poor woman was never well after ; but, however, I was obliged to the gentleman. you know.

*Aim.* Why, was it the usquebaugh that killed her ?

*Bon.* My Lady Bountiful said so—She, good lady, did what could be done : she cured her of three tympanies : but the fourth carried her off : but she's happy, and I'm contented, as the saying is.

*Aim.* Who's that Lady Bountiful you mentioned ?

*Bon.* Odds my life, sir, we'll drink her health : [*Drinks*].—My Lady Bountiful is one of the best of women. Her last husband, Sir Charles Bountiful, left her worth a thousand pounds a-year ; and I believe she lays out one-half on't in charitable uses for the good of her neighbours.

*Aim.* Has the lady any children ?

*Bon.* Yes, sir, she has a daughter by Sir Charles ; the finest woman in all our county, and the greatest fortune. She has a son too, by her first husband, 'Squire Sullen, who married a fine lady from London t'other day ; if you please, sir, we'll drink his health. [*Drinks*]

*Aim.* What sort of a man is he ?

*Bon.* Why, sir, the man's well enough : says little, thinks less, and does nothing at all, faith : but he's a man of great estate, and values nobody.

*Aim.* A sportsman, I suppose?

*Bon.* Yes, he's a man of pleasure; he plays at whist, and smokes his pipe eight-and-forty hours together sometimes.

*Aim.* A fine sportsman, truly!—and married, you say?

*Bon.* Ay; and to a curious woman, sir.—But he's my landlord, and so a man you know, would not—sir, my humble service to you. [*Drinks*] Though I value not a farthing what he can do to me; I pay him his rent at quarter-day; I have a good running trade; I have but one daughter, and I can give her—but no matter for that.

*Aim.* You're very happy, Mr Boniface: pray what other company have you in town?

*Bon.* A power of fine ladies; and then we have the French officers.

*Aim.* O that's right, you have a good many of those gentlemen: pray, how do you like their company?

*Bon.* So well, as the saying is, that I could wish we had as many more of 'em. They're full of money, and pay double for every thing they have. They know, sir, that we paid good round taxes for the making of 'em; and so they are willing to reimburse us a little; one of 'em lodges in my house. [*Bell rings.*]—I beg your worship's pardon.—I'll wait on you in half a minute.

## ESSAYISTS.

The age now under notice does not derive greater lustre from its poets and comic dramatists, than from its originating a new and peculiar kind of literature, which consisted in short essays on men and manners, published periodically. Papers containing news had been established in London, and other large cities, since the time of the civil war; but the idea of issuing a periodical sheet, commenting on the events of private life, and the dispositions of ordinary men, was never before entertained either in England or elsewhere. In France, it must be allowed, the celebrated Montaigne had published in the sixteenth century a series of essays, of which manners formed the chief topic. Still more recently, La Bruyere, another French author, had published his *Characters*, in which the artificial life of the court of Louis XIV. was sketched with minute fidelity, and the most ingenious sarcasm.

But it was now for the first time that any writer ventured to undertake a work, in which he should meet the public several times each week with a brief paper, either discussing some feature of society, or relating some lively tale, allegory, or anecdote.

The credit of commencing this branch of literature is due to SIR RICHARD STEELE, a native of Ireland, and a conspicuous Whig member of the House of Commons during the reign of Queen Anne. After composing a few comedies of no great merit, and acting as gazette-writer to the Ministry, this gentleman, on the 12th of April 1709, commenced the publication of the *Tatler*, a small sheet designed to appear three times a-week, 'to expose,' as the author stated, 'the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour.' Steele, who had then reached his thirty-eighth year, was qualified for his task by a knowledge of the world, acquired in free converse with it, and by a large fund of natural humour; his sketches, anecdotes, and remarks, are accordingly very entertaining. To conciliate the ordinary readers of news, a part of each paper was devoted to public and political intelligence; and the price of each number was one penny. At first the author endeavoured to conceal himself under the fictitious name of Isaac Bickerstaff, which he borrowed from a pamphlet by Swift; but his real name soon became known, and his friend ADDISON then began to assist him with a few papers upon more serious subjects than he himself was able or inclined to discuss, and also with various articles of a humorous character. When the work had extended to the 271st number, which appeared on the 2d of January 1711, the editor was induced, by a consideration of the inconvenience of writing such a work without personal concealment, to give it up, and to commence a publication nearly similar in plan, and in which he might assume a new disguise. This was the more celebrated *Spectator*, of which

the first number appeared on the 1st of March 1711. The *Spectator* was published daily, and each number was invariably a complete essay, without any admixture of politics. Steele and Addison were conjoint in this work from its commencement, and they obtained considerable assistance from a few other writers, of whom the chief were Thomas Tickell, and a gentleman named Budgell. The greater part of the light and humorous sketches are by Steele; while Addison contributed most of the articles in which there is any grave reflection, or elevated feeling. In the course of the work, several fictitious persons were introduced as friends of the supposed editor, partly for amusement, and partly for the purpose of quoting them on occasions where their opinions might be supposed appropriate. Thus, a country gentleman was described under the name of Sir Roger de Coverley, to whom reference was made when matters connected with rural affairs were in question. A Captain Sentry stood up for the army; Will Honeycomb gave law on all things concerning the gay world; and Sir Andrew Freeport represented the commercial interest. Of these characters, Sir Roger was by far the most happily delineated: it is understood that he was entirely a being of Addison's imagination, and certainly, in the whole round of English fiction, there is no character delineated with more masterly strokes of humour and tenderness. The *Spectator*, which extended to six hundred and thirty-five numbers, or eight volumes, is not only much superior to the *Tatler*, but stands at the head of all the works of the same kind that have since been produced; and, as a miscellany of polite literature, is not surpassed by any book whatever. All that regards the *smaller morals* and decencies of life, elegance or justness of taste, and the improvement of domestic society, is touched upon in this paper with the happiest combination of seriousness and ridicule: it is also entitled to the praise of having corrected the existing style of writing and speaking on common topics, which was much vitiated by slang phraseology and pre-



fane swearing. The *Spectator* appeared every morning in the shape of a single leaf, and was received at the breakfast-tables of most persons of taste then living in the metropolis ; yet it is stated, that the greatest number sold in this shape did not exceed sixteen hundred and eighty. It has since passed through innumerable editions.

During the year 1713, while the publication of the *Spectator* was temporarily suspended, Steele, with the same assistance, published the *Guardian*, which was also issued daily, and extended to a hundred and seventy-five numbers, or two volumes. It ranks in merit between the *Spectator* and *Tatler*. Though Steele realized considerable sums by his writings, as well as by his places under Government, and married a lady of fortune in South Wales, he was always at a loss for money, which, it may be said, he could neither want nor keep. With many amiable features of character, and a high admiration of virtue in the abstract, his conduct was frequently inconsistent with the rules of propriety,—a circumstance which is attributed in part to his pecuniary embarrassments. Being once reproached by Whiston, a strange but disinterested enthusiast in religion, for giving a vote in Parliament contrary to his former professed opinions, he replied, ‘ Mr Whiston, you can walk on foot, but I cannot ; ’ a sentiment which, if serious, certainly lays him open to the severest censure. He died in 1729.

The humorous manner of these celebrated papers is very happily instanced in Addison’s sketch of

#### THE POLITICAL UPHOLSTERER.

There lived some years since, within my neighbourhood, a very grave person, an upholsterer, who seemed a man of more than ordinary application to business. He was a very early riser, and was often abroad two or three hours before any of his neighbours. He had a particular carefulness in the knitting of his brows, and a kind of impatience in all his motions, that plainly discovered he was always intent on matters of importance. Upon my enquiry into his life and conversation, I found him to be the greatest newsmonger in our quarter ; that he rose before day to read the *Postman* ; and that he would take two

or three turns to the other end of the town before his neighbours were up, to see if there were any Dutch mails come in. He had a wife and several children; but was much more inquisitive to know what passed in Poland than in his own family, and was in greater pain and anxiety of mind for King Augustus's welfare than that of his nearest relations. He looked extremely thin in a dearth of news, and never enjoyed himself in a westerly wind. This indefatigable kind of life was the ruin of his shop; for about the time that his favourite prince left the crown of Poland, he broke and disappeared.

This man and his affairs had been long out of my mind, till about three days ago, as I was walking in St James's Park, I heard somebody at a distance hemming after me: and who should it be but my old neighbour the upholsterer? I saw he was reduced to extreme poverty, by certain shabby superfluities in his dress: for notwithstanding that it was a very sultry day for the time of the year, he wore a loose great-coat and a muff, with a long campaign wig out of curl; to which he had added the ornament of a pair of black garters buckled under the knees. Upon his coming up to me, I was going to enquire into his present circumstances; but was prevented by his asking me, with a whisper, whether the last letters brought any accounts that one might rely upon from Bender? I told him, none that I heard of; and asked him, whether he had yet married his eldest daughter? He told me, no. But pray, says he, tell me sincerely, what are your thoughts of the King of Sweden? for though his wife and children were starving, I found his chief concern at present was for this great monarch. I told him, that I looked upon him as one of the first heroes of the age. But pray, says he, do you think there is any thing in the story of his wound? And finding me surprised at the question, nay, says he, I only propose it to you. I answered, that I thought there was no reason to doubt of it. But why in the heel, says he, more than in any other part of the body? Because, said I, the bullet chanced to light there.

This extraordinary dialogue was no sooner ended, but he began to launch out into a long dissertation upon the affairs of the north; and after having spent some time on them, he told me, he was in a great perplexity how to reconcile the Supplement with the English Post, and had been just now examining what the other papers say upon the same subject. The Daily Courant, says he, has these words, we have advices from very good hands, that a certain prince has some matters of great importance under consideration. This is very mysterious; but the Postboy leaves us more in the dark, for he tells us, that there are private intimations of measures taken by a certain prince, which time will

bring to light. Now the Postman, says he, who uses to be very clear, refers to the same news in these words: the late conduct of a certain prince affords great matter of speculation. This certain prince, says the upholsterer, whom they are all so cautious of naming, I take to be ———. Upon which, though there was nobody near us, he whispered something in my ear, which I did not hear, or think worthy my while to make him repeat.\*

We were now got to the upper end of the Mall, where were three or four very odd fellows sitting together upon the bench. These I found were all of them politicians, who used to sun themselves in that place every day about dinner time. Observing them to be curiosities in their kind, and my friend's acquaintance, I sat down among them.

The chief politician of the bench was a great asserter of paradoxes. He told us, with a seeming concern, that by some news he had lately read from Muscovy, it appeared to him that there was a storm gathering in the Black Sea, which might in time do hurt to the naval forces of this nation. To this he added, that for his part, he could not wish to see the Turk driven out of Europe, which he believed could not but be prejudicial to our woollen manufacture. He then told us, that he looked upon those extraordinary revolutions, which had lately happened in those parts of the world, to have risen chiefly from two persons who were not much talked of; and those, says he, are Prince Menzikoff, and the Duchess of Mirandola. He backed his assertions with so many broken hints, and such a shew of depth and wisdom, that we gave ourselves up to his opinions.

The discourse at length fell upon a point which seldom escapes a knot of true-born Englishmen, whether, in case of a religious war, the Protestants would not be too strong for the Papists? This we unanimously determined on the Protestant side. One who sat on my right hand, and, as I found by his discourse, had been in the West Indies, assured us, that it would be a very easy matter for the Protestants to beat the pope at sea; and added, that whenever such a war does break out, it must turn to the good of the Leeward Islands. Upon this, one who sat at the end of the bench, and, as I afterwards found, was the geographer of the company, said, that in case the Papists should drive the Protestants from these parts of Europe, when the worst came to the worst, it would be impossible to beat them out of Norway and Greenland, provided the northern crowns hold together, and the Czar of Muscovy stand neuter.

He further told us for our comfort, that there were vast tracts

\* The prince here alluded to so mysteriously was the Pretender, James Stuart, son of King James II.

of lands about the pole, inhabited neither by Protestants nor Papists, and of greater extent than all the Roman Catholic dominions in Europe.

When we had fully discussed this point, my friend the upholsterer began to exert himself upon the present negotiations of peace, in which he deposed princes, settled the bounds of kingdoms, and balanced the power of Europe, with great justice and impartiality.

I at length took my leave of the company, and was going away; but had not gone thirty yards, before the upholsterer hemmed again after me. Upon his advancing towards me, with a whisper, I expected to hear some secret piece of news, which he had not thought fit to communicate to the bench; but instead of that, he desired me in my ear to lend him half-a-crown. In compassion to so needy a statesman, and to dissipate the confusion I found he was in, I told him, if he pleased I would give him five shillings, to receive five pounds of him when the great Turk was driven out of Constantinople; which he very readily accepted, but not before he had laid down to me the impossibility of such an event, as the affairs of Europe now stand.\*

#### MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.

Of this class, the most eminent by far was JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1744), Dean of St Patrick's, a man of harsh, selfish, and vulgar character, but gifted with intellectual powers of the most vigorous nature. Swift was a native of Ireland, which, it may be remarked, now began to contribute a respectable share of the literary talent usually concentrated in the British metropolis. The earlier part of his life was spent chiefly in England, and in connexion with the Whig faction; he afterwards became a Tory, and was the friend of Pope, Bolingbroke, and other wits of that party. His works are chiefly of a political character, and were written only to serve a temporary end; yet they are such models of satirical composition, that they still continue to form a constituent portion of every good English library. 'They are written with great plainness, force, and intrepidity, and always advance

\* Tatler, vol. iii.

at once to the matter in dispute. Their distinguishing feature, however, is the force and vehemence of the invective in which they abound; the copiousness, the steadiness, the perseverance, and the dexterity, with which abuse and ridicule are showered upon the adversary.' This was, beyond all doubt, Swift's great talent, and the weapon by which he made himself formidable. 'He was, without exception, the greatest and most efficient *libeller* that ever exercised the trade; and possessed, in an eminent degree, all the qualifications which it requires—a clear head, a cold heart, a vindictive temper, no admiration of noble qualities, no sympathy with suffering, not much conscience, not much consistency—a ready wit, a sarcastic humour, a thorough knowledge of the baser parts of human nature, and a complete familiarity with every thing that is low, homely, and familiar in language.'\* His earliest work of importance was his *Tale of a Tub*, published anonymously in 1704, and designed as a burlesque of the disputes among the Catholics, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians. For some years after, he was employed entirely in political and occasional writings, the most remarkable of which was his pamphlet called *The Conduct of the Allies*, published in 1711, by which he disposed the nation to submit to a peace, then anxiously desired by the Ministry. The displacement of his party in 1714, by George I., sent him into retirement in Ireland, and he scarcely resumed his pen till 1724, when he published a series of letters under the signature of 'M. B. Drapier,' in order to rouse popular feeling against a job of the Government, for introducing a new coinage of half-pence into Ireland. In this object he succeeded so effectually, that the project was given up. By these and other tracts, in behalf of the popular party in Ireland, he became the idol of the common people, and is said to have possessed far more real power than the highest of the constituted authorities. An archbishop, who was

\* Edinburgh Review, XXVII.

also a lord-justice of the kingdom, once taxed him with exasperating the mob ; when Swift promptly refuted the charge by saying, ' If I had lifted up my little finger, they would have torn you to pieces.' These writings, however, did not so much proceed from any real sympathy with the people, as from a hatred of the party who had then possession of the Government.

The most perfect of the larger compositions of Swift, and that by which he will probably be longest remembered, is the extraordinary work called *Gulliver's Travels*, which appeared in 1726, and was altogether a novelty in English literature. Its main design is, under the form of fictitious travels, to satirize mankind and the institutions of civilized countries ; but the scenes and nations which it describes are so wonderful and amusing, that the book is as great a favourite with children, as with those who delight in contemplating the imperfections of human nature. The curiosity it excited at its first appearance was unbounded ; it was the universal topic of discourse ; prints from it filled the shop-windows ; it gave denominations to fashions ; and, what is a stronger proof of its popularity, it introduced words which have become a part of the English language. In the latter part of his life, he published another burlesque on the social world, under the title of *Polite Conversation*, being an almost exact representation of the unpremeditated talk of ordinary persons. A still more ludicrous and satirical work appeared after his death, under the title of *Directions to Servants*. The days of this great wit terminated in insanity.

Besides the books already alluded to, Swift wrote many letters, which rank among the best compositions of that kind in the language, and a considerable number of satirical and humorous poems. The chief characteristics of his prose are, the extensive command which he seems to have possessed over the stores of colloquial language, and the nerve and precision with which he employs it. His great art in satire, is to write as if he were a very simple man, and thus to treat vices, follies, and imperfections,

without the least scruple or disguise, and consequently to display them in their utmost possible deformity.

Among the miscellaneous prose-writers of the period, the next to Swift in excellence is certainly ADDISON, whose best writings, however, are his contributions to the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*. Besides these, and a few political pamphlets and essays, he gave to the world an account of his travels in Italy, an essay on medals, and a small work in defence of the Christian religion. His manner of writing, whether upon humorous or serious subjects, is remarkable for its smoothness, delicacy, and gentleness. Next to him must be ranked DANIEL DEFOE (1663-1731), originally a hosier in London, but who, in middle life, became an active political writer in behalf of the Whigs and Dissenters, and finally advanced from that walk of literature to the composition of fictitious adventures. His best fiction was his *Robinson Crusoe*, which appeared in 1719, and has since become the favourite study of youth over the greater part of the civilized world. It describes a solitary shipwrecked mariner upon a desert island in the Pacific Ocean, his reflections, his resources, and the extraordinary shifts and exertions by which in time he became self-provided. The success of this singular book induced the author to write *The Life of Colonel Jack*, *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, and *The Adventures of Captain Singleton*, all of which are set forth as memoirs written by the parties themselves, and possess an air of feasibility and truth which no fictitious writer could give so well as Defoe. DR JOHN ARBUTHNOT, a native of Scotland, and physician to Queen Anne, deserves to be mentioned here for his comic and satirical writings, though these are not now much read. Being a zealous Tory, he enjoyed the intimate friendship of Pope, Swift, and Gay; and so frequently did the whole four unite their wits for the annoyance of their political opponents, that the authorship of what is attributed to Arbuthnot is not very clearly ascertained. It is, however, generally allowed, that to him belongs the honour of having wholly or chiefly writ-

ten the *Memoirs of Martinus Scribbler*, a satire on the abuses of human learning (never completed); the *History of John Bull*, a burlesque on the war of the Spanish Succession; and a *Treatise concerning the Scolding of the Ancients*. A good-natured vein of pleasantry runs through all the compositions of this author, whose personal character was also remarkable for many excellencies. He died in 1735.

Though none of the compositions of LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU (1690-1762), were published in her own lifetime, her writings belong to this period. She was the daughter of the Duke of Kingston, and accompanying her husband, Mr Edward Wortley Montagu, to Constantinople, where he officiated as ambassador in 1717-18, wrote from that country to her friends in England a series of lively descriptive letters, which are considered to this day as models of epistolary composition. Lady Mary also introduced from Turkey the practice of inoculating children for the smallpox, which has been the means of saving many lives, and obviating much misery. She was a lady of almost masculine vigour of mind, and the intimate friend of all the great writers of the period. Her letters from Turkey, united with those which she wrote at subsequent times, constitute five volumes, and it is understood that many others remain unpublished in the possession of her family.

#### METAPHYSICIANS.

The metaphysical writings of the period under review were in some instances ingenious, elegant, and even profound; but it cannot be said that they have added much to the stock of useful speculation in that department of study. By far the greatest writer of this kind was DR GEORGE BERKELEY (1684-1753), Bishop of Cloyne, a man of disinterested and most amiable character, and of very great natural and acquired talents. In 1709, he



published a work called *The Theory of Vision*, in which he was the first to point out, what is now universally allowed, that the connexion between sight and touch is the effect of habit ; insomuch that a person born blind, and suddenly made to see, would at first be utterly unable to foretell how the objects of sight would affect the sense of touch, or indeed whether they could be touched or not. The learned Doctor was led, in a subsequent publication, entitled *Principles of Human Knowledge*, to extend this doctrine to what is called *immaterialism* ; that is to say, he attempted to show that we cannot prove that any thing really exists, but that all objects which we suppose to be tangible, make a mere impression on the mind by the immediate act of the Deity, according to certain laws, from which in the ordinary course of nature there is no deviation. In a work called *The Minute Philosopher*, published in 1732, he employed his peculiar ideas in defence of the Christian religion ; and in a subsequent pamphlet, he endeavoured to refute the scepticism of a great mathematician, by showing that the object, principles, and inferences of what is termed in that science the *analysis*, are not more distinctly conceived, or more evidently deduced, than religious mysteries or points of faith. The philosophical works of Berkeley are still held in esteem ; but their influence on the opinions and actions of men, if they ever had any, has long since ceased.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, third EARL OF SHAFTESBURY (1671-1713), attracted much attention during the reign of Queen Anne, by his numerous publications concerning the operations of the human mind, the most of which were collected into one work, entitled *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times*, in three volumes, published immediately after his death. The speculations of Shaftesbury contain much acute remark and fine sentiment ; but, though favourable to natural religion, they are slightly tinged with scepticism regarding revelation, and, upon the whole, are somewhat fantastic. His style corresponds in some measure to the sense ; it is elegant and

lofty, but bears too many marks of labour to be agreeable. A still less favourable view must be taken of the metaphysical writings of Henry St John Viscount BOLINGBROKE (1672-1751), a man of brilliant and versatile powers, but unprincipled, and disposed to write rather for effect than for truth. Bolingbroke was a Secretary of State in the Tory Ministry at the conclusion of the reign of Queen Anne, and, after the accession of George I., in order to avoid a threatened impeachment, fled to France, where he was for a short time in the service of the Pretender. The remainder of his life was for the most part spent in England, but in a state of total exclusion from power; and, under these circumstances, mortified ambition prompted him to publish many political essays in which patriotism was assumed as a mere instrument for annoying the Ministry, and to write a number of philosophical discussions based on equally unsound principles, and highly adverse to religion. Yet though the matter of his writings be of little value, his style was singularly eloquent for the period, and at the same time highly polished.

#### HISTORICAL, CRITICAL, AND THEOLOGICAL WRITERS.

The intellectual strength of this age, as already mentioned, was exerted in lively comments upon artificial life, whether expressed in prose or verse. It produced few writers of eminence in any of the departments of literature now to be adverted to, and no respectable cultivators of those many inferior but useful branches of literary labour, by which the people at large are apt to be benefited. The only historical writer worthy of being mentioned was LAWRENCE ECHARD (1671-1730), a clergyman of the Church of England. He published in 1699, his *Roman History*; in 1702, his *General Ecclesiastical History*; in 1707, and subsequent years, his *History of England*; which were the first respectable compilations of the kind, and continued for a long time to be in very general use.

DR RICHARD BENTLEY (1661-1742), Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Archdeacon of Ely, distinguished himself as a commentator and critic. His editions of several Greek and Roman classics are still esteemed as masterpieces of verbal criticism, though in some instances he is held liable to censure for having taken too great liberties with the text of his author. The *Grecian Antiquities* of PORTER Archbishop of Canterbury, published in 1697-8, became the standard work on that subject; and BASIL KENNET, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, about the same time produced what has since been the standard work on *Roman Antiquities*. The earlier portion of the period was adorned by the lives of Tillotson, South, and other theologians, who more properly belonged to the preceding age. Apart from these, the period may be said to have produced few great divines. The most eminent by many degrees was DR SAMUEL CLARKE (1675-1729), rector of St James's, Westminster, a man of extraordinary mental endowments, and singularly virtuous character. He published *Paraphrases on the Four Gospels*, *Sermons on the Attributes of God*, a work on *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, and *An Exposition of the Church Catechism*, all of which rank among the best English theological works, though the author's ideas respecting the Trinity are somewhat different from those maintained by the Church. Dr Clarke was also a classical annotator, and his editions of *Cæsar* and *The Iliad* are still held as unrivalled. WILLIAM LOWTH (1661-1732), prebend of Winchester, and rector of Buriton, acquired permanent celebrity by his *Vindication of the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Scriptures*, published in 1692; his *Directions for the Profitable Reading of the Scriptures*, 1705; and his *Commentaries on the Books of the Prophets*. He was also an excellent classical scholar, and in that capacity assisted several writers of inferior fame. FRANCIS ATTERBURY (1662-1731), bishop of Rochester, makes a great figure, both in the political and literary history of the time; having been so zealous

a partisan of the exiled house of Stuart, that he was himself banished in 1723 ; while his intimate friendship with Pope, Swift, and other Tory authors, has caused his name to be much mixed up with theirs. With the exception, however, of his letters to those gentlemen, which are admirable specimens of elegant familiarity, he produced no work which was calculated for lasting celebrity. BENJAMIN HOADLY, bishop of Bangor, (afterwards of Winchester,) (1676-1761,) was one of the most eminent theological writers of the age, on what is called the *low* side of the Church—that is to say, the side which makes the nearest approach to the Dissenters. The peculiar opinions by which Bishop Hoadly chiefly attracted notice, were, that the use of the Sacrament as a test for the admission of men to civil offices, was a prostitution of the sacred rite, that Christ was the true and ultimate head of the Christian Church, and that, consequently, all encouragements and discouragements of this world, were not what Christ approved of, tending to make men of one *profession*, not of one *faith*—hypocrites, not Christians. A sermon preached by him in 1717, upon these points, was the cause of the celebrated *Bangorian Controversy*, in which all the chiefs of both parties in the Church were engaged. As a controversialist, Bishop Hoadly enjoys the highest reputation ; he was one of the few who ever conducted religious disputes in the mild spirit of a Christian gentleman. In general divinity, he was the author of *Discourses on the Terms of Acceptance with God* ; a *Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, and a considerable number of sermons. His whole works fill three folio volumes. CHARLES LESLIE (1650-1722), originally a clergyman of the Church of Ireland, but who lost all his preferments at the Revolution for refusing to take the required oaths, distinguished himself as a controversial writer in favour of the views of the nonjurant, or Jacobite party, and by several works in defence of general religion, of which the

most valuable is his *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*, published in 1697.

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#### SIXTH PERIOD.

1727-1780.

THE fifty-three years between 1727 and 1780, comprehending the reign of George II. and a portion of that of George III., produced more men of letters, as well as more men of science, than any epoch of similar extent in the literary history of England. It was also a time during which greater progress was made in diffusing literature among the people at large, than had been made, perhaps, throughout all the ages that went before it. Yet while letters, and the cultivators of letters, were thus abundant, it must be allowed that, if we keep out of view the rise of the species of fiction called the *novel*, the age was not by any means marked by such striking features of originality or vigour as some of the preceding eras. It was rather remarkable for polishing former styles, and improving the external figure of knowledge, than for creating much that was new.

#### THE POETS.

The above observations apply peculiarly to the poetry of the age, which may be described as in general very correct and very sensible, but tame in manner, and deficient in imagination and feeling. This was probably owing, in a great degree, to the admiration which Pope and his contemporaries continued, throughout the whole of this period, to draw from the people of England. Overawed, as it were, by the great success of those illustrious men,

the writers who flourished during the remaining part of the century, dared not trust to their own observations of nature, but wrote in slavish imitation of both the styles of thought and of verse which they found already so highly approved by the public taste. Something was owing to the state of cultivated society, and to the circumstances in which most of the poets were placed. During the era under notice, much of the attention of enlightened persons was devoted to the improvement of manners, to repressing the barbarisms of the ignorant, and extinguishing the vices of word and deed, which had become fashionable in the reign of Charles the Second. Polite society thus necessarily assumed a dainty, formal, and pedantic character ; and whatever was hearty or natural, even though it might be quite innocent, was regarded with a kind of suspicion. As almost all the poets of the age were men of fashion, or at least habituated to the usages of good society, and chiefly resident amidst the artificial scenes of the metropolis, they could hardly fail to be affected by this prevailing disposition. To this cause, and to the supposed necessity of writing after models, as if any model were aught else than the accidental form into which a vigorous mind had thrown itself, is to be attributed the want of originality, passion, and imagination, which is so conspicuous in this period.

In the collected editions of the British poets, the works of upwards of seventy persons are classed between the years 1727 and 1780. Of these, however, comparatively few are worthy of particular notice. Young, Thomson, Gray, Collins, Akenside, Goldsmith, and Beattie, form a first rank. A second is composed of Somerville, Blair, Dyer, Green, Glover, Watts, Shenstone, Churchill, Falconer, Smollett, Armstrong, Langhorne, Bruce, Chatterton, Jones, Mickle, Johnson, Smart, Logan, the three Wartons, and Anstey. The remainder have produced several good pieces, but their works, as a whole, are not entitled to be kept prominently before the public eye.

EDWARD YOUNG, a clergyman of the English Church,

(1681-1765), was the author of various pieces published before 1727, none of which, however, except his tragedy of the *Revenge*, made any considerable impression on the world. His best work, and that by which he is now chiefly known, the *Night Thoughts*, belongs to the period under our notice; it is a serious poem in nine portions, the first of which was published by itself in 1742.

Young was a man of worldly character, and, in his external behaviour, by no means deficient in cheerfulness. His biographers allow, that the gloom of his poem was rather owing to disappointed ambition, than to any superior sentiment. The *Night Thoughts* are accordingly found to give, upon the whole, a distempered view of human life, and to contain much bombast and affectation. Yet, while the perusal of the whole is a painful and tedious task, the poem presents many passages of sublime expression, of profound reflection, and of striking imagery. As a characteristic specimen may be given a few lines from the ninth night, which we shall entitle

#### THE PREVALENCE OF MORTALITY.

What is the world itself?—a grave.  
 Whence is the dust that has not been alive?  
 The spade, the plough, disturb our ancestors;  
 From human mould we reap our daily bread.  
 The globe around earth's hollow surface shakes,  
 And is the ceiling of her sleeping sons.  
 O'er devastation we wild ravels keep;  
 Whole buried towns support the dancer's heel.  
 Each element partakes our scattered spoils;  
 As nature wide our ruin spreads: man's death  
 Inhabits all things, but the thought of man.  
 Now man alone: his breathing bust expires;  
 His tomb is mortal: empires die: where now  
 The Roman, Greek? They stalk an empty name!  
 Yet few regard them in this useful light,  
 Though half our learning is their epitaph.  
 When down thy vale, unlocked by midnight thought,  
 That loves to wander in thy sunless realms,  
 O Death! I stretch my view; what visions rise!  
 What triumphs! toils imperial! arts divine!

In wither'd laurels glide before my sight;  
 What lengths of far-fam'd ages, billow'd high  
 With human agitation, roll along  
 In unsubstantial images of air!  
 The melancholy ghosts of dead renown,  
 Whispering faint echoes of the world's applause,  
 With penitential aspect as they pass;  
 All point at earth, and hiss at human pride,  
 The wisdom of the *wise*, and prancings of the *great*.

But O, Lorenzo! far the rest above,  
 Of ghastly nature, and enormous size,  
 One form assaults my sight, and chills my blood,  
 And shakes my frame. Of *one* departed world  
 I see the mighty shadow: Oozy wreath  
 And dismal sea-weed crown her; o'er her side  
 Reclin'd, she weeps her desolated realms,  
 And bloated sons; and, weeping, prophesies  
 Another's dissolution soon in flames.  
 But like Cassandra prophesies in vain;  
 In vain to many; not I trust to thee.

Perhaps the most popular versifier of the period was JAMES THOMSON (1700-1748). He was the son of a clergyman in Roxburghshire, and educated for the Scottish Church, but at an early period of life he removed to London, where, in 1726, he published his poem of *Winter*. Three other compositions, respectively denominated *Summer*, *Spring*, and *Autumn*, successively appeared, and formed what now passes by the general title of his *Seasons*. These poems are in blank verse, and describe the various natural appearances of the year, in a very rich and eloquent, and often sublime style of language. Thomson wrote another large poem entitled *Liberty*, which, being upon an abstract subject, never became popular, though it contains many fine passages. Besides some tragedies, which met with considerable success upon the stage, he was the author of a poem in the stanza of Spenser, entitled the *Castle of Indolence*, which was designed as a kind of satire on his own soft and lethargic character, but is nevertheless the most perfect, and perhaps the most poetical, of all his compositions. Thomson,



though slothful in the extreme was a very amiable and benevolent man ; he died of a cold caught while sailing upon the Thames, and was buried at Richmond.

Collins and Gray are distinguished in lyrical poetry, a species of composition, of which the chief peculiarities are, energy of sentiment, fire and vivacity of expression, and a modulated melodiousness of measure, adapting it for music. With the exception of Dryden's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*, no lyrical pieces of eminent excellence had hitherto been produced in England ; but the art was now brought to a high degree of perfection, if not indeed to the highest which it has ever reached. THOMAS GRAY (1716-1771), the son of a London scrivener, was educated at Cambridge, and originally destined for the profession of the law. He spent the greater part of his life in studious retirement at Cambridge, where he ultimately became professor of modern languages and history. The most popular and admired work of Gray, is his *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*, which was published in 1750. His other pieces are chiefly lyrical, and their principal charm, according to a distinguished critic, is to be traced 'to the naturally exquisite ear of the poet, having been trained to consummate skill in harmony, by long familiarity with the finest models in the most poetical of all languages, the Greek and Italian.' In the odes to *Adversity*, *on the Spring*, and *on Vicissitude*, the genius of Gray is exhibited in its softer graces ; but in that *on the Progress of Poetry*, and in the wild descriptive ode entitled *the Bard*, in which he represents a Welsh harper denouncing Edward I. as the spoiler of his country, the poet rises to a strength and dignity little inferior to Milton. 'There is not an ode in the English language,' says Mr Matthias, 'which is constructed like these two compositions ; with such power, such majesty, and such sweetness ; with such proportioned pauses and just cadences ; with such regulated measures of the verse ; with such master principles of lyrical art displayed and exemplified, and at the same time with such concealment of the victory,

which is lost in the softness and uninterrupted flowing of the lines in each stanza ; with such a magical music, that every verse in it in succession dwells on the ear and harmonizes with that which has gone before.' The lyrics of Gray also display the superior qualities of fancy and tenderness, and, perhaps, owe most of their success to the strong sympathy which the poet every where manifests with the joys and sufferings of human nature. These characteristics are very happily displayed in some of the stanzas of his

ODE ON THE DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.

Ah happy hills, ah pleasing shade,  
 Ah fields beloved in vain,  
 Where once my careless childhood played,  
 A stranger yet to pain !  
 I feel the gales that from ye blow,  
 A momentary bliss bestow,  
 As, waving fresh their gladsome wing,  
 My weary soul they seem to soothe,  
 And, redolent of joy and youth,  
 To breathe a second spring.

Say, father Thames, for thou hast seen  
 Full many a sprightly race,  
 Disporting on thy margin green,  
 The paths of pleasure trace ;  
 Who foremost now delight to cleave  
 With pliant arm thy glassy wave ?  
 The captive linnet which enthrall ?  
 What idle progeny succeed,  
 To chase the rolling circle's speed,  
 Or urge the flying ball ?

While some on earnest business bent,  
 Their murmuring labours ply,  
 'Gainst graver hours that bring constraint  
 To sweeten liberty ;  
 Some bold adventurers diadain  
 The limits of their little reign,  
 And unknown regions dare descry,  
 Still as they run they look behind,  
 They hear a voice in every wind,  
 And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,  
 Less pleasing when possess'd;  
 The tear forgot as soon as shed,  
 The sunshine of the breast:  
 Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,  
 Wild wit, invention ever new,  
 And lively cheer, of vigour born;  
 The thoughtless day, the easy night,  
 The spirits pure, the slumbers light,  
 That fly th' approach of morn.  
 Alas, regardless of their doom,  
 The little victims play!  
 No sense have they of ills to come,  
 No care beyond to-day.  
 Yet see how, all around them, wait  
 The ministers of human fate,  
 And black misfortune's baleful train;  
 Ah show them where in ambush stand,  
 To seize their prey, the murderous band!  
 Ah tell them they are men!

\* \* \*

To each his sufferings: all are men,  
 Condemned alike to groan;  
 The tender for another's pain,  
 The unfeeling for his own.  
 Yet ah, why should they know their fate!  
 Since sorrow never comes too late,  
 And happiness too swiftly flies.  
 Thought would destroy their paradise.  
 No more; where ignorance is bliss,  
 'Tis folly to be wise.

WILLIAM COLLINS (1720-1756), the son of a hatter in Chichester, and educated at Oxford, can hardly be deemed inferior to Gray in the harmony and polish of his composition; while, with less pathos than the former, he displays a still richer imagination. In 1746, while living as a literary adventurer in London, he published his odes, among which was the celebrated one *To the Passions*. He was a man of extensive learning, and very amiable character; but having contracted irregular habits, he gradually lost the powers of both body and mind, and finally was placed in an asylum for lunatics, where he

died. Among his best pieces may be mentioned his *Ode to Evening*, his *Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlanders* (of Scotland), and a little lyric in honour of those who die fighting for the liberties of their country—the last of which is as follows:—

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,  
By all their country's wishes blest!  
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,  
Returns to deck their hallowed mold,  
She there shall dress a sweeter sod,  
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.  
By fairy hands their knell is rung,  
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;  
There Honour comes, a pilgrim gray,  
To bless the turf that wraps their clay,  
And Freedom shall a while repair,  
And dwell a weeping hermit there.

The *Pleasures of Imagination*, by MARK AKENSIDE (1721–1770), published when the author was only twenty-three years of age, is a poem full of fine imagery, expressed in rich, copious, and musical language. Akenside was the son of a butcher at Newcastle, and practised physic first at Northampton, and afterwards in London. Personally he was vain and irritable; but his poetical genius displayed a vigour and enthusiasm superior to his age. The ardour expressed in the two following stanzas, is calculated to enchant every generous mind:—

ON A SERMON AGAINST GLORY.

Come, then, tell me, sage divine,  
Is it an offence to own  
That our bosoms e'er incline  
Towards immortal Glory's throne?  
For with me nor pomp nor pleasure,  
Bourbon's might, Braganza's treasure,  
So can Fancy's dream rejoice,  
So conciliate Reason's choice,  
As one approving word of her impartial voice.  
If to spurn at noble praise  
Be the passport to thy heaven,  
Follow thou those gloomy ways;  
No such law to me was given,

Nor, I trust, shall I deplore me,  
 Faring like my friends before me;  
 Nor an holier place desire  
 Than Timoleon's arms require,  
 And Tully's curule chair, and Milton's golden lyre.

The chief poems of OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774), are *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*; the former of which is a contemplative and descriptive piece of the highest merit, while the latter contains some of the happiest pictures of rural life and character in the English language. Goldsmith, who was a native of Ireland, and originally educated for the medical profession, spent the time between the year 1758 and his death, as a professed man of letters, in the metropolis, and wrote comedies, histories, and miscellanies, particularly an inimitable novel called the *Vicar of Wakefield*. He was a man of good dispositions, but vain, and irregular in his conduct; and, though he realized large sums by his writings, he died deeply in debt. His poetical compositions are characterised by a delightful combination of simplicity, elegance, and pathos.

JAMES BEATTIE (1736-1803), a native of Scotland, was the last of those who can properly be placed in the first order of the poets of this time. In 1771, while professor of moral philosophy at Aberdeen, he published his celebrated poem *The Minstrel*, which describes, in the stanza of Spenser, the progress of the imagination and feelings of a young and rustic poet. Beattie also wrote several philosophical and controversial works, which attracted considerable attention in their day. His poetry is characterised by a peculiar meditative pathos.

Of the second class of the poets of this age, the first in point of time is WILLIAM SOMERVILLE, a country gentleman of Warwickshire (1692-1742), whose chief poem was one in blank verse, entitled *The Chase*, describing in a very animated manner the circumstances attending that sport. ROBERT BLAIR (1700-1748), minister of Athelstaneford, in Scotland, wrote a serious poem in blank

verse, entitled *The Grave*, which has ever since been admired for the strong and solemn pictures which it draws of mortal affairs. JOHN DYER (1700–1758), a country clergyman, enjoys a respectable reputation as a didactic and descriptive poet: his chief poems are *The Fleece* and *Grongar Hill*. One lively descriptive poem, entitled *The Spleen*, has preserved the name of MATTHEW GREEN (1696–1737), an officer in the custom-house of London. RICHARD GLOVER (1712–1783), is chiefly remembered for an epic poem called *Leonidas*, which he published in his twenty-fifth year, and which for a long time enjoyed considerable celebrity, though none of his works are now much read. The name of ISAAC WATTS, venerable for the worth of him who bore it, continues to enjoy as extensive popularity as any other of this period. Watts (1674–1748) was originally a Dissenting minister in London, but, on account of delicate health, spent the last thirty-six years of his life in the bosom of a private family of opulence at Stoke Newington, where he wrote many works in divinity and morals. Besides some miscellaneous poems, which display a lively fancy and refined taste, he wrote a large mass of devotional lyrical poetry, part of which was adapted to the capacities of children. WILLIAM SHENSTONE (1714–1763), a gentleman of Shropshire, is chiefly remembered for his pastoral elegies, which have a softness and smoothness of diction, in the highest degree pleasing, though they bear little reference to the sentiments and circumstances of actual rustic life.

WILLIAM FALCONER, a native of Scotland, and reared as a common sailor, published in 1762 *The Shipwreck*, a descriptive poem, which has ever since been considered as a valuable part of the stock of English poetry. It was designed to describe a scene of suffering which took place in a voyage from Alexandria to Venice, when the poet was one of three, who, out of a large crew, were able to make their way from the perishing vessel to the shore. A tale of the affections is interwoven with the narrative; but it was the liveliness and originality of the descriptions,

that gave the poem its principal title to notice. In consequence of his success as a poet, Falconer was elevated to the situation of purser in an East India vessel; but the ship, after leaving the Cape of Good Hope, was never more heard of.

The name of CHURCHILL is now remembered as a part of political and literary history, while his works have almost entirely ceased to be read. He was originally a clergyman, but having fallen into embarrassed circumstances, and being fond of the life of a man of letters, he began in 1761 to employ himself as a satirist, his first production being *The Rosciad*, the object of which was to hold up to ridicule the defects of the principal London actors, as well as the characters of a number of gentlemen who interested themselves in theatrical affairs. Churchill was a man of coarse feelings and low habits; but his powers as a satirist were so very great, that, if he had exerted them on subjects of general and permanent interest, his writings could hardly have failed to secure a lasting reputation. Being attached to a popular party, of which Mr John Wilkes was the chief, he devoted himself to the task of satirizing the ministry of the Earl of Bute, and all its adherents, among whom might be reckoned the whole of the Scottish nation. In the *Prophecy of Famine*, all the antiquated notions of the lower English respecting their northern neighbours are embodied with such fancifulness of exaggeration, as almost redeems the prejudice from which the poem took its rise. Many works of less note were published by Churchill during his brief career, which terminated in November 1764, when he was only thirty-three years of age.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT (1721-1771), so eminent as a novelist, wrote a few poetical pieces, which display much delicacy, and an elevated tone of sentiment. Among these, his *Ode to Leven Water* is the most popular. JOHN ARMSTRONG (1709-1779), who, like Smollett, was a native of Scotland, and a physician, was the author of a didactic or instructive poem of respectable reputation,

entitled *The Art of Preserving Health*, and of some other pieces of less celebrity. LANGHORNE, a clergyman of the English church, enjoyed in his lifetime considerable fame as a poet, but is now little known: *Owen of Carron*, an imitation of the old ballad style, in peculiarly soft and melodious versification, is almost the only production of this writer which continues to be printed in popular collections. An *Elegy on Spring*, and a short descriptive poem entitled *Lochleven*, form the chief memorials of the genius of MICHAEL BRUCE, a schoolmaster in an obscure part of Scotland, who died in 1767, at the early age of twenty-one. His college companion, JOHN LOGAN (1748–1788), was the author of a well-known *Ode to the Cuckoo*, of a tragedy named *Runnymede*, and some other poems, which continue to rank in the collections of the British poets: he also published a volume of sermons, much admired for their refined sentiment and elegant composition. WILLIAM JULIUS MICKLE (1734–1788), a native of Dumfries-shire, is chiefly remembered for his translation of the *Lusiad* of Camoens, a Portuguese poet. His original poems, like too many of those produced in the age now under notice, have little to recommend them besides that melody of versification in which poetry was then supposed chiefly to consist, and for which almost every thing else seems to have been sacrificed.

The most remarkable name in the whole range of the poets of this age, is that of THOMAS CHATTERTON, a youth of obscure parentage at Bristol, who, in his seventeenth year, possessed the genius and dexterity necessary for writing a series of poems in the old English language, which he passed off upon some competent judges as the productions of a versifier of the fifteenth century, and which contained many passages of the highest poetical beauty. This extraordinary youth afterwards sought employment as a miscellaneous writer in London; but being overtaken by pecuniary distress, he put an end to his own life, August 25, 1770, when he as yet wanted three



months of being eighteen years of age. It seems unquestionable, from the specimens he has left, that, if he had survived to maturity, he must have taken one of the first places in English literature.

DR SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784) is less admired for his poetical than for his moral and critical productions; yet his *Vanity of Human Wishes* has a moral impressiveness that belongs to few writers since the time of Pope. Excepting *London*, a satire, his other poems are chiefly occasional and trifling. It is remarkable that, while his conversation abounded in metaphor, he gave little illustration of that kind to his verses, in which they would have been more appropriate.

One of the few poets who seem to have been inclined to break through the tame mediocrity of the age, was CHRISTOPHER SMART (1722-1770), a man of eccentric character and degrading habits, but possessed of a singular genius. Smart had been educated as a clergyman, but being compelled to sell a college fellowship, in order to pay some tavern debts, he finally settled in London as a man of letters. His mind was at one time so far unsettled by dissipation, that he required to be confined in an asylum for lunatics, where, being denied the use of pen, ink, and paper, he marked his verses with a key upon the wainscot. In this manner was written his best production, the *Song to David*, which, though betraying some obscurity and irregularity, the result of a deranged understanding, contains, perhaps, more energetic and magnificent poetry than any short poem of the time. Smart had also a considerable turn for humorous verse. The life of this ill-fated poet terminated in the King's Bench prison.

SIR WILLIAM JONES (1746-1794) is more eminent as an Oriental scholar, and a man of almost universal accomplishment, than as a poet, though some of his lyrical pieces are much admired, and have added to our current phraseology a few highly energetic and beautiful expressions. His *Ode in Imitation of Alcæus*, is a heart-stirring effusion of patriotism.—Of the three WARTONS, the eldest,

Thomas, professor of poetry at Oxford (1687-1745), was a chaste and pleasing versifier. His eldest son, JOSEPH (1722-1800), a dignitary of the English church, though he entertained opinions respecting poetry somewhat in advance of his time, as expressed in his *Essay on Pope*, can only be described as another of the correct versifiers who so much abounded in the eighteenth century. His brother, THOMAS (1728-1790), professor of poetry at Oxford, ranks rather higher as a poet, being possessed of a better descriptive power; but his name owes its chief lustre to his *History of English Poetry*, which is a work of great research and equal taste. This list of secondary poets concludes with CHRISTOPHER ANSTREY (1724-1805), a gentleman of fortune in Cambridgeshire, who, besides some miscellaneous pieces, was the author of a humorous poem, entitled *The New Bath Guide*, in which the manners of that city, about the beginning of the reign of George III., were described with great wit and satirical vivacity, but with a licentiousness which detracts much from its value in the eyes of the present generation.

In the still considerable list of poets which remains, there may be found some talent, and, in general, correct versification, with very few pieces, or even lines, that have captivated the fancy, or impressed themselves on the memory, of the people. The names of Hammond, Savage, Aaron Hill, Mallet, Lord Littleton, Hamilton of Bangour, Grainger, Dodsley, Penrose, Wilkie, Blacklock, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, Isaac Hawkins Browne, Mason, and Miss Seward, retain a certain degree of fame, though only the reflection of something that once was, as their works have long ceased to be reprinted. Others, such as Welsted, West, Whitehead, Cunningham, Harte, Jago, Lloyd, and Lovibond, only meet the eye when we chance to turn up some half-antiquated collection of the British poets.

Besides the poets already here enumerated as natives of Scotland, all of whom wrote in English, that country

produced one writer in the native dialect—ROBERT FERGUSON—who, after a brief career of twenty-four years, died in 1774. Ferguson excelled in descriptions of city life, as then exemplified in the Scottish capital; and in his homely strains there is perhaps more of real genius than in whole volumes of the tame and regular versification of his contemporaries.

#### TRAGIC DRAMATISTS.

As the miscellaneous poetry of this age was but a refined and tame imitation of that which prevailed in the era of Pope, itself in some measure an imitation of the productions of the Dryden school, so were the tragedies chiefly imitative of those which had gone before them, all of which were upon the French model. The English tragic drama was now weeded of all mixture of comedy, which in the older plays gave it liveliness, at the expense occasionally of good taste; but it was also relieved in a great measure of all reference to real passion, and became a matter of little more than declamation and bombast. The *Revenge*, by Dr Young, produced a little before the commencement of our era, was a play of this kind, notwithstanding that it still maintains its place in the stock of the British Theatre. So were also the tragedies of *Sophonisba* and *Agamemnon*, by the author of *The Seasons*. In these cases, men of the best abilities in general poetry altogether failed to exhibit that picture of the higher passions which constitutes a successful tragedy. The public taste was nevertheless in some degree accommodated to the nature of that which was habitually placed before it; so that plays directly translated from the French met with temporary applause. The *Zara*, *Alzira*, and *Merope* of Voltaire, exemplary specimens as they were of the stiffness and coldness of that school, were produced with success by Mr Aaron Hill. The few other plays which have preserved any degree of celebrity, may be

briefly enumerated. The *Gustavus Vasa* of Brooke, published in 1739, at a time when its representation was forbidden, contains much patriotic sentiment. *Barbarossa*, by Dr John Brown, an English clergyman, produced in 1755, possesses such a moderate degree of merit, that, if it had not a peculiar convenience for strolling companies in its limited number of characters, it must have long since sunk. ARTHUR MURPHY (1727-1805), a native of Ireland, wrote several tragedies, of which *The Grecian Daughter*, one by no means of eminent merit, has alone taken its place among our ordinary acting plays. The *Caractacus* of Mason (1759), was an attempt to revive the severe simplicity of the ancient Greek drama; but the lyrics introduced in accordance with that model, though pronounced beautiful as poems, were found inconsistent with modern dramatic taste, and the play failed to produce the effect which constitutes successful representation. About this time, a portion of natural feeling was restored to the tragic stage by EDWARD MOORE, in the fine moral play of *The Gamester* (1755), of which the characters were from common life; and by JOHN HOME, a Scottish clergyman, whose *Douglas* (1757), though neither in diction nor in character superior to contemporary productions, represents the emotions of maternal and filial affection with so much simple tenderness, that it never fails to draw both tears and applause. *The Mysterious Mother*, also, by Horace Walpole (1768), while involving incidents peculiarly revolting, and hardly fit even for private study, has the merit of being comparatively free from the trammels imposed by custom, is written in a manly and vigorous style, and contains characters that are not representatives of classes, or vehicles of particular lines of sentiment, but show bold, true, and original features. But these are instances which, after all, tend little to relieve the general flatness of tragedy throughout the age under our notice.

## COMIC DRAMATISTS.

While the tragic drama languished under the influence of the same rules and modes which deprived serious poetry of all passion and sublimity, comedy experienced a prosperity such as was to be expected in an age in which the forms of social life were so much the subject of attention. This was peculiarly the age of what is called *genteel comedy*—that is, plays like those of the preceding era, but rendered more moral, and in a slight degree more sentimental, while the characters were equally derived from the higher orders of society. In this department of literature no name stands above that of GEORGE COLMAN, whose *Jealous Wife* (1761), and *Clandestine Marriage* (1766), are perfect models of dramatic excellence. The *Good-Natured Man*, (1768), and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), of Goldsmith, cannot be ranked so high; for, though full of humorous dialogue and character, they call in the aid of disguise and ambuscade—expedients originally derived from the Spanish drama after the Restoration, but now generally confined to the minor plays called *farces*, which, it may be observed, were little known before this age, and of which Garrick and Murphy wrote some excellent specimens. The *Suspicious Husband* of Hoadly (1747), partakes so much of the sprightly license of the school of Farquhar, that it can hardly perhaps be ranked in the class of genteel comedy. In the early part of the reign of George III., sentiment had taken a decided place in our comic drama, and was the ground of the success of Hugh Kelly, whose *False Delicacy* and *School for Wives*, though now almost forgotten, proved, for the reason stated, more attractive in their day than even the plays of Goldsmith.

The *Beggar's Opera*, which has already been adverted to as a production of the preceding period, was the means of creating a new class of dramas, which flourished side by side with the genteel comedies, and still maintain a respectable place on the British stage. This was the

*English Opera*, in which the pervading dialogue is in no respect different from that of an ordinary comedy, but is enlivened at frequent intervals with songs by one or more persons. The best productions of this kind, which appeared during the period under notice, are *The Maid of the Mill* and *Love in a Village*, by Isaac Bickerstaff, who has never been excelled upon the stage in delineations of simple rural life.

## PERIODICAL ESSAYISTS.

It is somewhat remarkable that, although the essays of Steele and Addison were immediately imitated by many writers [there was even a *Scottish Tattler*, by Donald M'Stuff], no work of the kind obtained a classic reputation until nearly forty years had elapsed, when several excellent series were produced. The first of these was the *Rambler*, by SAMUEL JOHNSON; it was commenced on the 20th of March 1750, and continued to appear twice a-week, till March 14, 1752, when it had extended to two hundred and eight papers. The *Rambler* was devoted, like its predecessors of the reign of Queen Anne, to the discussion of subjects connected with ordinary life and the lesser morals, but treated them in a more grave and philosophical manner, with a gloomy pathos peculiar to the author, who was affected by a constitutional melancholy. Lively and trivial matters are not overlooked by this most majestic of all the essayists; but it was the fault of Johnson, that he had only one manner of composition, so that a thoughtless fop is described in the same solemn and laboured diction, which is used in moralizing on the uncertainty of human life. The next in point of time, and perhaps also of merit, entitled the *Adventurer*, was commenced in November 1752, by DR JOHN HAWKESWORTH (1715–1773), who ranks among the most elegant miscellaneous writers of the eighteenth century. This work, to which Johnson lent his valuable assistance, and which was aided by Bathurst and Joseph Warton, ex-

tended to one hundred and forty numbers, and terminated in March 1754. It was favourably received by the public, and merited its success by the purity of its morals, the elegance of its critical disquisitions, and the acquaintance it displayed with life and manners. The papers of the editor, about seventy in number, resemble in style the *Ramblers* of Johnson, with somewhat less pomp of diction. Those which have been most admired consist of Eastern tales, and stories of domestic life; in the former of which Hawkesworth exhibits a fine imagination, and in the latter a considerable knowledge of human character. The excellent morality of the *Adventurer* procured for the editor the degree of doctor of civil law, which was conferred upon him by Archbishop Herring. In January 1753, the *World*, a paper hardly less celebrated, was commenced by Mr EDWARD MOORE, author of the tragedy of *The Gamester*, with the assistance of the Earl of Chesterfield, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and other writers of reputation. This work extended to two hundred and ten numbers, the last being published at the close of the year 1756. The contributions of the editor are lively and judicious, though the perpetual use of irony, to which dangerous figure of rhetoric he was much addicted, gives them an unpleasing sameness. The *Connoisseur*, which was published weekly by GEORGE COLMAN and BONNELL THORNTON, between January 1754 and September 1756, and was thus partially contemporary with *The Adventurer* and *The World*, professes to criticise town manners with greater freedom than those papers, and is altogether a work of greater gaiety and smartness, though apparently not less zealous in the cause of morality. All these periodicals had an extensive sale in their original form, and the appearance of so many at once, by different authors, is a striking proof of the temporary opulence of English genius in this department of literature. In April 1758, Johnson commenced his *Idler*, which extended to one hundred and ten numbers, and is a more playful work than *The Rambler*. With this work closes the series of

the English periodical essayists; for the detached pieces of Shenstone, Goldsmith, and Knox, bearing no dates, must be ranked with the miscellaneous effusions of literature. This mode of writing and of publication was, however, revived in Scotland, at a time somewhat in advance of that now engaging our attention. *The Mirror* (1779-80), and *The Lounger* (1785-6), by Mr Henry Mackenzie, and other writers of less note, showed that the talent for this kind of composition might be found to the north of the Tweed, though the subjects in general had little or no reference to native manners or ideas. But it may be questioned if the literary value of these and most of the preceding essayists is not much exaggerated. When a reader fresh from modern literature looks into them, he is surprised to find that their views of human character generally refer only to those superficial modes which constitute what is called fashion, while many of their moral precepts and discussions bear upon points long since silently acquiesced in by cultivated society, or touch on vices of which the existence is now hardly discernible. A perusal of the essayists is thus not unlike a visit to a museum containing antiquated dresses and pictures of inconvenient buildings long since removed. They are certainly valuable as records of an artificial kind of life which once existed; but, wanting the solid and enduring groundwork of actual human nature, they can claim hardly any other merit. In the vices which they censure there is a grossness, and in the virtues which they celebrate a fastidiousness and puritanism, alike unknown to modern times, the errors and excellences of which are of a totally different character, and would accordingly require different treatment. The style is equally unsuitable to modern taste, having a faint and mincing propriety, and a tame neatness and dimness, as far removed as possible from the strong, graphic, straightforward, and, it may be, less correct, manner which has come in its place.



## NOVELISTS.

In introducing a class of authors, who have since assumed so high a rank in literature, it is not necessary to trace the *novel* from the rise of prose fiction in the fourth century, or even from the adoption of the word by the Italian tale-writers of the fourteenth. Suffice it to state, that in France, a class of fictitious compositions arose in the seventeenth century, under the denomination of *heroic romances*, from which the modern sentimental novel may be said to have been almost immediately derived. These works took the name of romances, from the so-called compositions of the Provençal minstrels,\* (already described,) which they resembled, in as far as they chiefly related to ancient heroes; but while the characters belonged to remote antiquity, the manners and sentiments were those of the existing court of France, so that they were more like to what we now call novels, than to romances. In general, they were of extravagant length; the *Grand Cyrus* of Madame de Scudery, who is the most celebrated writer of heroic romances, extended to ten huge volumes, and the perusal of it would serve to entertain a young lady of that time for several months. Though long ago laid aside on account of their intolerable dulness and remoteness from nature, they had the merit of containing much refined sentiment, and generally recommending an exalted line of moral conduct. The French *heroic plays*, which have already been mentioned as imported into England after the Restoration, were a kindred class of compositions.

Admired as they were in their own day, the heroic romances could not long escape being burlesqued. The poet Scarron, about the time of our Commonwealth, attempted this in a work which he entitled the *Comique*

\* The name was derived from the dialect in which the minstrels wrote, which was styled the *Roman*.

*Roman*, or *Comic Romance*, which detailed a long series of adventures, as low as those of Cyrus were elevated, and in a style of wit and drollery of which there is hardly any other example. This work, though designed only as a ludicrous imitation of another class of fictions, became the first of a class of its own, and found followers in England long before we had any writers of the pure novel. A lady named Aphra Behn, who died in 1689, amused the public during the reign of Charles II., by writing tales of personal adventure similar to those of Scarron, which are almost the earliest specimens of prose fiction that we possess. She was followed by Mrs Manley, whose works are equally humorous, and equally licentious. The fictions of Daniel Defoe, which have been adverted to in the preceding section, are an improvement upon these tales, being much more pure, while they at the same time contain more interesting pictures of character and situation. Other models were presented in the early part of the century by the French novelist, Le Sage, whose *Gil Blas* and *Devil on Two Sticks*, imitating in their turn the fictions of certain Spanish writers, consist of humorous and satirical pictures of modern manners, connected by a thread of adventure. Little else need be said of the English novels antecedent to the time of Richardson and Fielding, except that they were mean in subject and indecorous in style, and calculated to degrade, while they could not in any respect improve, their readers.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689-1761), author of the first classical work in this branch of composition, was a printer in London, and had reached the age of fifty before he emerged into public notice. Having always been remarkable for his expertness in letter-writing, he was requested by two booksellers, in 1739, to compose a volume of epistles referring to the common concerns of life, which might serve as models for the instruction of persons of ordinary education. After much importunity, he was induced to revolve the subject in his mind ; but, on commencing the work, he thought it might be much enlivened if it could

be made to convey a story. He adopted for this purpose a tale which he had heard in early life, the persons of which carried on the narrative by means of a succession of letters; and thus was in time produced the novel of *Pamela*, which appeared anonymously in 1740. Not only on account of the superior literary merits of this work, but from its being the first English novel that inculcated piety and virtue, it immediately obtained a great reputation, and was even recommended by the clergy from the pulpit.

It was nevertheless so questionable, both in its details and in its ultimate moral, that a superior genius of that day was tempted to make it the subject of a burlesque. This was HENRY FIELDING (1707-1754), a young man of good birth, but who had lived for some years as a writer of plays, in which capacity he had met with no great success. While Richardson had all the tame decorum of an elderly and respectable tradesman, Fielding displayed the manners of the *man of fashion* of that time, accustomed to regard lightly some of the vices which *Pamela* was chiefly designed to censure, and disposed to treat nothing with severity which was not a direct infraction of the laws of honour, or inconsistent with manliness, candour, or generosity. Indignant at the success of what he considered as mere cant, Fielding wrote his *History of Joseph Andrews*, which, unlike the most of works produced under such circumstances, excelled its original, and immediately assumed a rank which it has never since forfeited. Fielding, indeed, had not aimed at burlesquing Richardson by a grotesque imitation of his manner; he rather endeavoured to overpower him by reviving and illustrating the free style of Cervantes, Scarron, and Le Sage, whose degenerate followers it had been an object with Richardson to throw into the shade. The strength of the novel may be said to lie in the character of Parson Adams, whose 'simplicity, benevolence, and purity of heart, are so admirably mingled with pedantry, absence of mind, and with the habits of athletic and gymnastic

exercise, then acquired at the Universities by students of all descriptions, that he may be safely termed one of the richest productions of the muse of fiction.' In 1747, having meanwhile employed his pen upon several works of inferior note, Fielding produced his *Tom Jones, or History of a Foundling*, which has been loudly and justly censured for its immoral tendency, while there is but one opinion as to the extraordinary skill and talent with which it is written, and the amusement which it is calculated to afford to the reader. It is regarded as a masterpiece of art in the department of humorous fiction, the fable being alike felicitously conceived, managed, and brought to an issue, the characters drawn with the truth of life, and the whole replete with lively sallies of the imagination, and the most acute remarks upon mankind. According to a critic, who judges the work by the rules on which it was constructed, 'The action has that unity which is the boast of the great models of composition; it turns upon a single event, attended with many circumstances, and many subordinate incidents, which seem, in the progress of the work, to perplex, to entangle, and to involve the whole in difficulties, and lead on the reader's imagination with an eagerness of curiosity, through scenes of prodigious variety, till at length the different intricacies and complications of the fable are explained, after the same gradual manner in which they had been worked up to a crisis; incident arises out of incident; the seeds of every thing that shoots up are laid with a judicious hand, and whatever occurs in the latter part of the story, seems naturally to grow out of those passages which preceded; so that, upon the whole, the business, with great propriety and ability, works itself into various embarrassments, and then afterwards, by a regular series of events, clears itself from all impediments, and brings itself inevitably to a conclusion.' A novel of smaller dimensions, entitled *Amelia*, published in 1751, was the last work of any importance produced by Fielding, who died prematurely of gout at Lisbon, in the forty-eighth year of his

age. His greatest fault as a writer is his imperfect or incorrect morality. His works are certainly not deficient in pictures of moral excellence, and he generally represents vice as followed by punishment, or at least inconvenience ; yet he is greatly blamable for too often sheltering folly and guilt under the plea of goodness of heart, and for gratuitously and needlessly introducing scenes, which, though perhaps but too consistent with the manners of the period, and with human nature, cannot be contemplated in literature with any advantage.

Undeterred by the satire of Fielding, the author of *Pamela* proceeded with another and more elaborate novel, of which the first four volumes appeared in 1748, and the remaining four a year or two later, under the title of *Clarissa Harlowe*. He here ventured upon events and characters of a higher order, and met with still greater success. This work, of which the principal charm lies in the saint-like purity of the heroine, is written, like its predecessor, in letters ; but the style makes a considerable advance in dignity and accuracy, qualities in which Richardson, with all his merits, is upon the whole considerably deficient. The interest which *Clarissa* excited was greater than even that which attended *Pamela* ; and it met with the highest approbation both in England and on the continent. Between the publication of the first four and the last four volumes, the comfort of the reading world seemed suspended on the result of the story ; and on a report being circulated that it was to end tragically, though that was the only way in which it could appropriately terminate, remonstrances poured in upon the author from all quarters, beseeching him to reclaim his profligate hero, and unite him in wedlock to *Clarissa*. *Sir Charles Grandison*, the latest performance of Richardson, appeared in 1753, in seven volumes, being intended to depict a gentleman remarkable for every Christian virtue. In this design the author only succeeds too well ; for the product of his imagination is correct to tameness, and tires by its solemn and unimpassioned dignity. This novel, however, contains

a female character (Clementina) which equals any creation of the author's fancy. All the characters in Richardson's works are drawn with minute care and fidelity, and the interest of his story generally depends on a series of details which at first sight appear tiresome, but, after the perusal of a few pages, engage the reader inextricably in his task, and cause him to take up volume after volume with increasing pleasure. Long as *Clarissa* and *Grandison* are, it is understood that the author wrote them at first in a much more extensive form, and found it necessary to retrench them before publication. There is a tradition, that the former was originally calculated to fill twenty-eight volumes !

Meanwhile, a new and formidable rival to Richardson and Fielding had sprung up, in the person of TOBIAS SMOLLETT (1721-1771), a native of Dumbartonshire in Scotland, who, after entering life as a naval surgeon, became an author by profession in London, and in 1748 published his *Adventures of Roderick Random*, a work of stronger, though less polished humour than *Tom Jones*, but equally abounding in happy delineation of character, and possessing, in short, many of both the same faults and the same beauties. This was followed in 1751 by *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, which, with less easy and forcible humour, is more carefully laboured as a work of art, exhibits scenes of greater interest, and presents a richer variety of character and adventure. *Count Fathom* and *Sir Launcelot Greaves* were subsequent and inferior novels by the same writer ; but at the close of life, his genius shone forth in all its original splendour in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, which contains the same striking delineations of character, and the same broad humour, for which his two first productions are distinguished. Smollett was a much less skilful artist than Fielding, and in none of his works has he attempted the construction of an intricate plot like that of *Tom Jones* : he was also inferior in delicacy, and more rarely relieves his writings by pictures of the more elevated qualities of hu-

man nature. But he far surpasses Fielding in his humour, which is indeed more rich and copious than that of any other English author. Like Fielding, Smollett is liable to censure for the impurity of many of his scenes and much of his language, and for the baseness and wickedness of some of those characters for which he chiefly demands the affections of the reader; but, greatly as these peculiarities may tend to unfit his volumes for indiscriminate perusal, his works present a faithful picture of the manners of the time, which were deficient alike of taste and of morality. Smollett was also a poet, and, in the course of a laborious literary career, wrote many miscellaneous works and compilations, none of which, however, (with the exception of a portion of his *History of England*), now obtain much notice.

The novels of these three eminent persons, though followed by numberless imitations, experienced little worthy or memorable rivalry during the period at present engaging our attention. The age, however, was rich in fictions of different kinds. In 1759, Dr Johnson produced his fine Eastern tale of *Rasselas*, which is designed to prove that no worldly pleasures are capable of yielding true gratification, and that men must look for this to a future state of existence. In the same year, LAWRENCE STERNE (1713-1768), an English clergyman of eccentric manners, burst upon the world with a comic fiction of startling novelty. This was *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, of which eight volumes in all were published during the course of six years. Sterne possessed wit, sensibility, considerable powers of language, and some acquaintance with old forgotten authors, whose thoughts he made no scruple to appropriate, when they answered his purpose. With these advantages, he composed a work referring to contemporary manners, which, amidst much frivolity and absolute nonsense, with a license of expression peculiarly unbecoming in a clergyman, contains some delineations of character, and strokes of pathos, and flights of fancy, which have never been surpassed, and but rarely approached.

In the characters of Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim, he has, in the words of Sir Walter Scott, 'exalted and honoured humanity, and impressed upon his readers such a lively picture of kindness and benevolence, blended with courage, gallantry, and simplicity, that their hearts must be warmed whenever it is recalled to memory.' In the last year of his life, Sterne published his *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, which is constructed with less eccentricity, and contains chapters of equal tenderness.

*The Vicar of Wakefield*, written in 1761 by OLIVER GOLDSMITH, then an obscure literary adventurer, residing in a mean part of London, is perhaps the very happiest, as it is certainly one of the least exceptionable, of the novels of the last century. It narrates, in the first person, the history of an amiable and simple-minded clergyman, during a series of domestic misfortunes, that severely try, but never subdue, his moral courage, and over which he is finally triumphant. With some defects in point of probability, it is a singularly beautiful and interesting picture of the middle class of English rural society; combining great knowledge of human nature and of the world, with the mildness of one who is too sensible of his own weaknesses to treat those of his neighbours with undue severity. *The Fool of Quality*, published in 1766 by Mr Henry Brooke, is a work of much greater extent, but may be ranked beside the *Vicar of Wakefield*, as affording many pleasing sketches of contemporary manners. It appears to have been chiefly designed for the young, for whose education it presents many excellent hints. *The Adventures of a Guinea*, by Charles Johnstone, published about this time, was another successful delineation of existing society, but deeply tinged with satire. The four writers last mentioned were natives of Ireland.

The series of the novelists of the period is closed by HENRY MACKENZIE (1745-1831), a native of Scotland, who, in 1771, published anonymously his celebrated *Man*



of *Feeling*, which was followed in the course of a few years by *The Man of the World*, and *Julia de Roubigné*. Mackenzie is distinguished by refined sensibility and by exquisite taste. His *Man of Feeling* is designed to show, in a few fragmentary chapters, exhibiting little coherence, a hero constantly obedient to every emotion of his moral sense, and apparently almost too sensitive and tender-hearted for contact with the world. His second novel aimed at exhibiting a person who, rushing headlong into guilt and ruin, spreads misery all around him, by the pursuit of selfish and sensual pleasures. Mackenzie, with more delicacy, possesses much of Sterne's peculiar pathos; he has great fancy, and incomparable taste; his characters, however, have the fault of being only representatives of certain ideas, instead of genuine pictures of individuals existing, or who might have existed. His works, it may be said, are moral treatises in narrative.

This period witnessed the commencement of that kind of fiction which at present bears the title of the *Romance*. The earliest example of it was the *Castle of Otranto*, by the Honourable HORACE WALPOLE, published in 1764. Walpole (1717-1797), a younger son of the celebrated prime minister, having devoted himself to the study of Gothic architecture, by degrees his imagination became filled with appropriate ideas of the chivalry of the middle ages. A dream at length presented to him the groundwork of what he thought could be wrought up into a romantic fiction, and the result was this elegant tale of superstition, the scene of which is laid in the south of Italy in the eleventh century. The *Castle of Otranto* immediately acquired great popularity, and was successfully imitated by MRS CLARA REEVE, in a story entitled *The Old English Baron*, which appeared in 1777. It was not, however, till the ensuing period of literary history, that the *Romance* was carried to its utmost perfection.

## HISTORIANS.

The era now under notice may be not improperly termed the Augustan age of historical composition in Britain.

In the early part of the century, history was written laboriously, but without elegance. The best compilation of the history of England was that of Echard, already mentioned; or, as an alternative, the reader might choose the three folios published in 1706, under the title of *The Complete History of England*, in which the space preceding the reign of Charles I., was given in the language of various authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while the subsequent reigns were the composition of White Kennett, bishop of Peterborough, celebrated for his controversial writings on the Whig side of Church politics. In 1725, a voluminous history of England, written in the French language, was printed at the Hague, being the composition of Monsieur Rapin, a refugee French Protestant. Of this work, two translations appeared in England, where it obtained the credit of presenting much solid information, in a manner upon the whole impartial, though rather more favourable to the Whigs than to the Tories. There were other compilations, but so deficient in all the important requisites of history, as to be unworthy of notice.

In surveying the historical productions of the period, we are first attracted by the voluminous productions of THOMAS CARTE (1686-1754), originally a clergyman of the Established Church, but who, being prevented by his Jacobite predilections from taking the oaths to George I., assumed the lay habit in 1714, and devoted himself to literary pursuits. Carte was a laborious inquirer, but by no means an accomplished writer, and too strongly swayed by political prejudices to be a fair and just historian. His first work was *The Life of James Duke of Ormond*, published in 1735-6, in three large volumes, and embracing much of the general history of the latter part of

the preceding century. He then commenced researches for a history of England, in which he was encouraged by the chiefs of the Tory party and others, among whom were the common council of London, who voted him an annuity during the time he should be occupied in the undertaking. The first volume appeared in 1747, and would have been well received, if its credit had not been shaken by an absurd story thrust in at the end, respecting a man who was said to have been cured of the king's evil by the touch of the Pretender in the year 1716. The fourth volume, published after the death of the author, brought the history down to the year 1654; it is still esteemed as a great collection of facts, though the style is inelegant and the reflections unphilosophical. The *Roman History* of NATHANIEL HOOKE, published in four large volumes, between 1733 and 1771, is a work in some respects similar, but written more clearly, and with more critical acuteness in the choice of materials.

The public possessed only these ungainly compilations, when DAVID HUME (1711-1776), by birth the younger son of a Scottish country gentleman, and who had distinguished himself by some metaphysical writings, took advantage of his situation as librarian to the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh, to commence a history of England, in which a judicious selection of events should be treated in a philosophical manner. The first volumes, embracing the reigns of the Stuart sovereigns, appeared in 1754-6; and the work was completed before 1761, by the addition of the earlier periods. It was the first example of the highest kind of historical composition which appeared in English literature, and it has ever since been the standard work upon the subject, notwithstanding the superior erudition, accuracy, and even elegance, of subsequent writers. Its acknowledged defects are carelessness both as to facts and style, and deliberate partiality towards the cavalier party in the contests of the seventeenth century; to which may be added one of greater importance, for which, however, the author is not blamable,

its want of the inestimable advantages which are now derivable from state documents and other genuine materials of history. The merits of this writer are, however, so great,—so singular is the charm which his vigorous mind has imparted to the narrative,—and so enlarged and philosophical are the greater part of his views of events and characters,—that he promises, with the aid of a judicious commentary, if such can be obtained, long to continue superior to all rivalry.

The compilation of such a work by an author who could hardly be said to speak the language in which it was expressed, was one of the most remarkable circumstances connected with it. Scotland had hitherto afforded hardly any writers of English who approached classical excellence; and the surprise was accordingly great, when a piece of composition, so graceful amidst all its negligence, was produced on the northern shores of the Tweed. The truth is, that, during the reign of George II., a considerable number of learned persons in Scotland had been studying English literature with the greatest zeal; inasmuch that, about the time when Mr Hume's history appeared, societies existed in more than one of the university towns, for the purpose of encouraging not only the *writing*, but as much as possible the *speaking* of pure English. The country was now accordingly prepared to produce that brilliant cluster of writers, embracing Hume, Blair, Robertson, Smith, and others, which occupies so prominent a place in the literary history of the period.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON (1721–1793), a country clergyman, enjoying comparatively few advantages for historical study, published in 1759 his *History of Scotland during the reigns of Queen Mary and King James VI.*, which was at once pronounced to be a still finer specimen of English composition than the work of Hume, though wanting the nervous philosophy of that writer. Encouraged by the success of this effort, Dr Robertson ventured upon a task requiring far more research and greater grasp of mind, and gave to the world, in 1769, his *History of the*

*Reign of the Emperor Charles V., with a View of the Progress of Society in Europe from the Subversion of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the Sixteenth Century.* In this work he had to survey, in the first place, the steps by which the social institutions of antiquity have passed, through the ages of barbarism, into the characteristic features of the state of modern Europe; secondly, he had to commemorate, with appropriate spirit and dignity, a series of transactions of peculiar interest, extending throughout the better part of a century, and in which the most civilized countries of Europe were engaged. This difficult performance was accomplished with the most perfect success, and with a material increase to the reputation of the author. The last considerable work of Dr Robertson was his *History of America*, which appeared in 1777, and is perhaps, on account of its subject, the most entertaining of all his works. From a time immediately subsequent to his first publication, he had enjoyed several considerable preferments, besides a pension of £200 from the king; and being a man of singular prudence, temperance, and natural dignity of character, the latter part of his life was spent in the enjoyment of almost every worldly blessing. His merits as a writer are thus described by one of his biographers: 'His style is pure, sweet, dignified without stiffness, singularly perspicuous, and often eloquent; the arrangement of his materials is skilful and luminous, his mode of narrative distinct, and his descriptions highly graphical; and he displays a sagacity in the development of causes and effects, and in his judgment of public characters and transactions, which is very remarkable in one who was brought up in obscurity and retirement. If there is less glow and ardour in his expression of moral and political feelings, than some eminent writers in a free country have manifested, there is, on the other hand, all the candour and impartiality which belong to a cool temper, when enlightened by knowledge and directed by principle.'

Hume and Robertson were the means of exciting at

once a taste in the public for historical reading, and a desire in literary men to rival them in the same department. An elaborate *History of the Reign of Henry II.* was published by George LORD LYTTLETON, in 1767-71. DR ROBERT HENRY (1718-1790), a Scottish clergyman, devoted thirty years of his life to the composition of a *History of Great Britain*, in which the civil, ecclesiastical, constitutional, literary, and commercial affairs, and the progress of arts and of manners, were each treated in a distinct series of chapters. This work appeared in detached portions at different dates between 1771 and 1785, but was brought down no farther than the reign of Henry VIII. It is a perspicuous and useful production, though the author's views and reflections are marked by little force or originality. A *Biographical History of England*, consisting of engraved portraits of the principal personages of English history, with short sketches of their characters, was published in 1769 by the REV. JAMES GRAINGER. *Lives of Queen Elizabeth, Raleigh, Tillotson, Henry Prince of Wales*, and others, were written with great research, but in a somewhat dry manner, by DR THOMAS BIRCH (1705-66), one of the secretaries of the Royal Society. We may also here advert to Dr Charles Burney's elaborate *General History of Music*, in four volumes (1776-89), and to Dr Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry*, of like extent, produced between 1774 and 1781—a work of vast research, and upon the whole accurate, but left incomplete by the author.

In the less ambitious walk of historical composition, where the object was simply to furnish books of a certain extent and form, for the convenience of ordinary readers, the age now under notice was not less distinguished. Indeed, the reign of George II. may be termed the epoch of respectable compilation in England, for, excepting Echard and Kennett, there had not previously existed any literary men who were qualified to put existing knowledge into new shapes with the required dexterity and neatness. A most valuable work, under the

title of *Universal History*, of which the portion devoted to ancient times extended to seven, and the modern part to sixteen volumes, in folio, was brought out by the London booksellers in the reign of George II., and is still a constituent part of every good library. It was written by Bower, Campbell, Guthrie, Sale, Psalmanazar, and other professional authors of eminence. The first of these individuals published a *History of the Popes*; Campbell was the author of *Lives of the Admirals*, and of the best articles in the *Biographia Britannica*; Guthrie published a *History of Scotland*, a *History of England*, and a *Geographical and Historical Grammar*, which has continued in repute almost to our own day; and Sale gained celebrity by translating the *Koran of Mohammed*. The three first were natives of Scotland. Dr Smollett published, in 1758, a *History of England*, in four quarto volumes, which he is said to have written in the brief space of fourteen months. This work he afterwards brought down to the year 1765. Though, as might be expected, it is superficial in point of information, and much beneath Hume's *History* in every other respect, the portion which extends from the Revolution to the end of the reign of George II., is usually appended to that superior production, as the best account of the period which as yet exists. Goldsmith, being compelled to resort to compilation for his daily bread, wrote several short histories, which have ever since been very generally used in schools. His *History of England, in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son*, published in 1763 in two small volumes, was so much admired at the time as to be generally attributed to Lord Lyttleton. His larger *History of England*, in four volumes, and his histories of Greece and Rome, received equal approbation. There is, however, no writer of this class who approaches in skill, sprightliness, and energy, to DR WILLIAM RUSSELL, a native of Selkirkshire, who, in 1779-84, supplied the London booksellers with a *History of Modern Europe*, in seven volumes; a production which it is at once so brief, so perspicuous, so

comprehensive, and so entertaining, that all rivalry appears to be precluded. This work, each volume of which cost the labour of a year, was brought down by the author to 1763, but has been continued by Dr Coote and other writers to the present time. It is the view of modern European history most proper for the perusal of young persons.

The latter part of the era under review produced a historical work of the first class. EDWARD GIBBON (1737-1794) was the son of a gentleman of family and fortune, and thus enabled to devote the whole of the earlier part of his life to study. Instead of applying, however, to the usual academic pursuits, he spent his time chiefly in a course of miscellaneous reading, particularly in the belles lettres, and in the history of man and of the human mind. In his youth he embraced and soon after renounced the Roman Catholic religion, and displayed many other symptoms of an eccentricity which was perhaps solely attributable to genius. He spent much of his time upon the Continent, and made his first appearances as an author in the French language. At length, while musing one evening amid the ruins of the Capitol at Rome, he formed the resolution to write the history of the decay and overthrow of the great empire of which that city was the metropolis. He soon after proceeded to make the necessary researches; and in 1776 appeared the first volume of this work, under the title of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the remaining five being added in the course of the twelve ensuing years. It has been pronounced by the public to be a performance of vast and accurate research, and of enlarged and philosophical thinking; abounding in splendid passages and curious discussions; and written in a style, which, though affectedly sonorous and occasionally obscure, is such as to display in the author a thorough mastery of the whole compass of the English language. Notwithstanding an oblique attack upon Christianity, which was very generally condemned, it has taken



a secure place among the English classics, and must ever form a conspicuous object in the literary history of the eighteenth century.

#### METAPHYSICAL WRITERS.

Several metaphysical writers of this period have obtained a brilliant reputation, though it is now generally believed that they have made no solid additions to human knowledge. The earliest and most distinguished is DAVID HUME, already commemorated as a historian. In 1738 he published a *Treatise on Human Nature*; in 1742, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*; and subsequently, a *Natural History of Religion*; to which were added in 1779, after his death, *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*. His philosophy, as it has been called, was an attack upon all formerly conceded principles of knowledge and belief; maintaining, in short, that through the fallaciousness of the human faculties, and even of the senses, it is impossible to ascertain or believe any thing. In 1749, DAVID HARTLEY, an English physician, published his celebrated *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations*; in which an attempt was made to explain all the phenomena of mind by the single principle of association of ideas, and to account for this principle by vibrations in the substance of the brain; a system which he alleged to be perfectly consistent with the doctrines of both natural and revealed religion. Soon after, a *System of Moral Philosophy*, by DR FRANCIS HUTCHESON, a native of Ireland, who long occupied the chair of moral science in the University of Glasgow, was published posthumously, and attracted much notice. The leading doctrine is, that all our moral ideas are derived from a *moral sense* implanted in our natures, and which, independently of all consideration as to the advantage of any good action, leads us to perform such ourselves, and to approve of them when done by others. DR ADAM SMITH, professor of

logic in the same college, and one of the boldest and most original thinkers of the age, published, in 1759, his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which is founded on the principle of *sympathy*, as the source of our feelings concerning the propriety or impropriety of actions, and their good or ill desert. This was followed by an *Enquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, published in 1764 by DR THOMAS REID (1710–1796), professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow; a man of powerful and comprehensive intellect. His work was intended to refute the philosophy of Locke and Hartley, by disproving the connexions which they suppose to subsist between the several phenomena, powers, and operations of the mind, and by accounting for the foundation of all knowledge on a system of instinctive principles. It was completed about twenty years after by the publication of *Essays on the Intellectual and Active Powers*. In 1752, HENRY HOME (1696–1782), an advocate at the Scottish bar, (subsequently a judge, with the designation of Lord Kames,) published *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion*; which, opposing those theories of human nature which deduce all actions from some single principle, endeavoured to establish several general principles of action. He afterwards wrote *An Introduction to the Art of Thinking*, which continues to be esteemed as an useful book for young persons, and *Elements of Criticism*, a truly original performance, which, discarding all arbitrary rules of composition, establishes a new theory upon the principles of human nature. In 1773, Lord Kames produced his *Sketches of the History of Man*, a work of much ingenuity and entertainment, and comprising many important views of society, though fanciful throughout, and based in some places on facts of suspected authority. About this time DR JAMES BEATTIE, professor of moral philosophy at Aberdeen, and who has already been mentioned as one of the most eminent poets of the period, entered the field of controversy against Hume, with an *Essay on Truth*, which, assuming

an instinctive perception of truth in the human mind, and combating the inferences of his countryman respecting religion, was much applauded at the time, and procured a royal pension for the author, but has since been very generally pronounced a superficial and undignified performance. In 1775, the doctrines of Reid and Beattie were attacked by DR JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, an English dissenting clergyman of singularly varied accomplishments, who had adopted Hartley's theory of the mind. Besides the work published on this occasion, which bore the title of *An Examination of the Doctrine of Common Sense*, the same author gave to the world a simplification of Hartley's theory, for popular use, and, in 1777, a series of *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*, which exposed him to much obloquy, on account of their inconsistency with the more commonly received views of Christianity. Dr Priestley, who belonged to the class called Unitarians, and is generally allowed to have shown great philosophical acuteness in these publications, in consequence of the odium which they had connected with his name, was in 1794 obliged to leave his native land, and settle in America. It is a fact not unworthy of remark, that, with the exception of Hartley, Hutcheson, and Priestley, all the speculators in moral science mentioned in the present chapter, were natives of Scotland; a country of which it has been said, that the genius of the people is peculiarly fitted for the cultivation of this department of human knowledge.

#### WRITERS IN DIVINITY.

In religious literature the eighteenth will bear no comparison with the seventeenth century. The Church is allowed to have been, in this age, less zealous in its duties than it was before, or has been since; and when the clergy employed their pens, it generally was rather to attack or defend some point in divinity, than to pour forth those

eloquent appeals to the minds of men, which so much enrich the former period. The two greatest clerical writers by many degrees were Warburton and Butler, both of whom reached the episcopal dignity in consequence of their services in this capacity. WILLIAM WARBURTON (1698–1779), Bishop of Gloucester, exerted his genius in early life as editor of Shakspeare and Pope. In 1738 he began to publish his *Divine Legation of Moses*, which was completed some years afterwards in six volumes, and is one of the most extraordinary works in the language, being a wonderful collection of uncommon learning, applied in the support of original and often paradoxical views. He wrote many other books; but the subject which he chiefly endeavoured to illustrate was that of miracles. He was a man of vigorous faculties, indefatigable in inquiry, and possessed of a vast fund of knowledge; but personally was harsh, arrogant, and overbearing, and his writings are strongly tinged with these qualities. JOSEPH BUTLER (1692–1752), the son of a dissenting shopkeeper at Wantage in Berkshire, rose through a series of church preferments to the lucrative bishopric of Durham. His great work, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, published in 1736, is still considered a masterpiece of reasoning in behalf of Christianity, and is almost universally recommended to youth. Its object is, by drawing an analogy between religion and the constitution and course of nature, to show that both must have had the same origin; an argument which may be expected to have great power, after it is admitted that nature must have been derived from a divine and supreme being.

ROBERT LOWTH (1710–1787), son of Dr Lowth, mentioned in the preceding section of this work, rose to the bishopric of London, and distinguished himself by his intimate acquaintance with Hebrew literature, of which he gave examples to the world, in his *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Jews*, and his commentary on the

book of Isaiah. He also wrote an admired work on English grammar.

Much of the talent and learning of the established clergy of this period was exerted in discussing the doctrines embraced by the standards of the Church, and in defending the fundamental doctrines of Christianity from infidel writers. In 1730, Dr Matthew Tindal, Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford, published his celebrated treatise entitled *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, the object of which was to show that there neither has been, nor can be, any external revelation distinct from what he terms 'the internal revelation of the law of nature in the hearts of all mankind.' It was attacked by Dr Waterland and others, and gave rise to a long-continued controversy. Dr Conybeare obtained high church preferment in consequence of a defence of revelation against Tindal. Another of the opponents of this writer was DR CONYERS MIDDLETON (1683-1750), librarian of the University of Cambridge; a man whose personal and literary character somewhat resembled that of Warburton. Middleton was also the author of two standard religious works, in one of which an endeavour is made to show that the ceremonies of the Catholic church are founded upon those of paganism; the other, entitled '*A Free Enquiry into the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church from the Earliest Ages, through several successive Centuries*,' attempts to prove that all the miracles alleged to have been worked after the time of the apostles, are untrue. He also wrote an elaborate *Life of Cicero*, which has been discovered, however, to be chiefly derived from an obscure work by a Scottish author named Bellenden. The opinions of Dr Middleton were of such a general tendency as to draw down upon him much censure from what was called the orthodox party of the Church; that is, the party who are scrupulous in adhering to its original doctrines. Another eminent advocate for free inquiry and liberal

views, but more amiable as a private individual, was Dr JOHN JORTIN (1698–1770), author of *Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Revelation*, which have obtained a high reputation for the solidity of argument and soundness of erudition which they display. It is in his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, a book extending to six volumes, that he has chiefly assumed that freedom of remark for which his more scrupulous brethren have condemned him. The *Sermons and Charges* of Dr Jortin, published after his death in seven volumes, have been much admired. Much Biblical learning, tinged with the same views, is to be found in the writings of Dr JOHN JEBB (1736–1786), a man of ardent and patriotic character, who, from conscientious motives, resigned some valuable livings which he held in the Church, and when far advanced in life studied the profession of physic as another means of earning a subsistence.

Of the other theological and devotional productions of the established clergy of this age, there is only room to notice a few of the best. The *Dissertations* of Bishop Newton on various parts of the Bible; the *Lectures on the English Church Catechism*, by Archbishop Secker; the *Commentary on the Psalms* and *Discourses* of Bishop Horne; Bishop Law's *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, and his *Reflections on the Life and Character of Christ*; Bishop Hurd's *Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies*—are all works of standard excellence. The labours of Dr Kennicott, in the collection of various manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, are also worthy of being here mentioned, as an eminent service to sacred literature.

The various bodies of Protestant nonconformists produced in this age a set of writers hardly less numerous than those of the established church. Dr NATHANIEL LARDNER (1684–1768), minister to a congregation at Crutched Friars in London, was the author of several works, which, neither in laboriousness nor utility, have been surpassed by any similar compositions of the endowed clergy. The chief is his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, published be-

tween 1730 and 1757, in fifteen volumes, and in which proofs are brought from innumerable sources in the religious history and literature of the first five centuries, in favour of the truth of Christianity. Another voluminous work, entitled, *A Large Collection of Ancient Jewish and Heathen Testimonies to the Truth of the Christian Religion*, appeared near the close of the author's life, and completed a design, which, making allowance for the interruptions occasioned by other studies and writings of less importance, occupied his attention for forty-three years. It is only to be lamented, that the patience and candour of this laborious writer were not attended by a greater dexterity in the art of shaping his materials, and giving them that currency with the public which is necessary to the full utility of every kind of composition. DR ISAAC WATTS, already mentioned as a poet, and a man of extraordinary personal worth, published, besides his *Logic* and a treatise on the *Improvement of the Mind*, many sermons, discourses, essays, and theological tracts, replete with orthodox divinity, and with true benevolence. Next to him in eminence is DR PHILIP DODDRIDGE (1702-1751), author of the excellent popular treatise entitled the *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, and of *The Family Expositor* (a version of the New Testament, with critical notes), besides many sermons and lesser tracts. It is remarkable that Dr Doddridge should have been able, during a short life, to produce so many laborious works, as he had not only to minister to a congregation at Northampton, but was obliged, for a livelihood, to keep an academy for the education of young men, of whom he had sometimes no fewer than two hundred under his charge. JAMES FOSTER (1697-1752), a Baptist, and one of the most popular preachers in London during the reign of George the Second, obtained a lasting fame by several learned and eloquent works in behalf of revelation. John Guyse, minister of Hertford, published a laborious *Paraphrase of the New Testament*, which is held in high estimation among the followers of Calvin. *A View of the*

*Principal Deistical Writers, with some Account of the Answers that have been written to them*, by Dr John Leland, minister to a body of Protestant dissenters in Dublin, is a book of high reputation. In his *Dissertation on Miracles*, it is generally allowed that Hugh Farmer, preacher at Walthamstow, has given a more powerful answer to the objections of scepticism, and presented a better view of the nature, origin, and design of those extraordinary manifestations of divine power, than any other of the numerous and eminent writers on this subject. Gibbons, Fell, Stennet, Booth, Williams, Fuller, Collyer, and Smith, are dissenting divines who likewise gained distinction by their writings during this age.

The literary contributions of the Scottish Presbyterians were very great. DR HUGH BLAIR (1718–1800), one of the ministers of Edinburgh, and the first preacher in Scotland who brought the graces of polite learning to the service of the pulpit, published in 1777 the first of the five volumes of his celebrated *Sermons*, which were so elegant in composition, and did so well expound the moral parts of religion, that they immediately became, and have ever since continued to be, extremely popular. Dr Blair was also the author of *Lectures on Rhetoric and the Belles Lettres*, which enjoy a reputation not inferior. JOHN LOGAN, minister of Leith, (already mentioned as a poet,) published a volume of discourses, rivalling those of Blair in elegance, and perhaps surpassing them in feeling. But the highest theological name of the period is that of DR GEORGE CAMPBELL (1719–1796), Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, who wrote an *Essay on Miracles*, in which it was generally allowed the scruples of Mr Hume were very triumphantly answered. Principal Campbell was also the author of a *Translation of the Gospels*, with notes, which stands in the first rank of the works of that kind.



## MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.

In this section are comprehended several eminent persons, who, though noticed under other heads, may here be more particularly adverted to, as much of their fame arises from miscellaneous literature ; this department also embraces a few who fall under no other division. Of the first class the most remarkable is DR SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784), whose character as a poet and essayist has already been given. He was born of obscure parents at Lichfield, and after an unsuccessful attempt as a teacher, became a professional author in London, where, during the earlier part of his life, he suffered great hardships. Among his miscellaneous writings must be reckoned his contributions to the early volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, his *Dictionary of the English Language*, his *Journey to the Western Islands*, and his *Lives of the Poets* and other persons. The compilation of the Dictionary occupied the years between 1747 and 1755, and though a work of great value for its admirable definitions, and rich in well-chosen and beautiful quotations, is now considered defective in etymology, and too limited in the selection of words. The *Journey to the Western Islands* contains many just and philosophical views of society, and some lively descriptions. Perhaps the very best productions of the pen of Johnson are his *Lives of the Poets*, which were written between 1779 and 1781, as prefaces to a collection of the works of those individuals. It is to be regretted that, according to the taste of the time, the list of the genuine poets of England being held to commence with Cowley, we want in this work memoirs of Chaucer, Spenser, and the many excellent writers who adorned the reigns of Elizabeth and James : at the same time, it admits notices of several persons whose writings are now justly neglected. Yet, after every defect and blemish has been acknowledged, there still remains a most valuable store of biography, criticism, and powerful thinking. The last peculiarity is that which

most conspicuously characterises the writings of Johnson. Under the weight of a pompous and over-artificial diction, and struggling with numberless prejudices and foibles, we see, in all of his compositions, the workings of a strong and reflecting mind. It is to be lamented that this great writer and virtuous man laboured under constitutional infirmities of body and mind, which rendered him occasionally gloomy, capricious, and overbearing; though he seems to have been by no means deficient in either abstract or practical benevolence. It is remarkable that, while the works of Johnson are becoming less and less familiar to modern readers, his life, as related by his friend JAMES BOSWELL, is constantly increasing in popularity. This appears to result from the forced and turgid style of his writing, which is inconsistent with the taste of the present age, while his colloquial language, as reported by his biographer, has perfect ease and simplicity, with equal, if not superior energy. The *Life of Johnson* is in itself one of the most valuable literary productions of the eighteenth century. It is the most minute and complete account of a human being ever written. Mr Boswell, who was a native of Scotland, and a man of lively, though not powerful intellect, employed himself for many years in gathering the particulars of his friend's life, in noting down the remarks of the moralist upon men and things, and in arranging and compiling his work, which was published in 1791 in two volumes quarto. Its author has thus, by an employment to which few men would have condescended, and a laborious exertion of powers, in themselves almost trifling, been the means of presenting to the world one of the most instructive and entertaining books in existence.

DR ADAM SMITH (1723-1790), who was alluded to in the section of metaphysical writers, as author of a *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published, in 1776, his *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*; the first work in which the science of Political

Economy was fully and philosophically treated. Dr Smith, who was a native of Scotland, and professor of moral philosophy in the University of Glasgow, is said to have spent about ten years in preparing this celebrated book, which, in the utility of its object, and in logical and vigorous thinking, differs greatly from the generality of the productions of the eighteenth century. It may be remarked of most of the writers, and also of the statesmen, of this age, that they aimed less at precise knowledge and sound reasoning than at rhetorical elegance: they sought the shadow rather than the substance. Dr Smith, on the contrary, devoted himself to the elucidation of a science which is not capable of any ornament, but professes to treat of every thing upon which the physical comfort of a country depends. He showed that the only source of the opulence of nations is *labour*—that the natural wish to augment our fortunes and rise in the world, is the cause of riches being accumulated. He demonstrated that labour is productive of wealth, when employed in manufactures and commerce, as well as when it is employed in the cultivation of land; he traced the various means by which labour may be rendered most effective; and gave a most admirable analysis and exposition of the prodigious addition made to its efficacy by its division among different individuals and countries, and by the employment of accumulated wealth, or *capital*, in industrious undertakings. He also showed, in opposition to the commonly received opinions of the merchants, politicians, and statesmen of his time, that wealth does not consist in the abundance of gold and silver, but in the abundance of the various necessities, conveniences, and enjoyments of human life; that it is in every case sound policy to leave individuals to pursue their own interest in their own way; that, in prosecuting branches of industry advantageous to themselves, they necessarily prosecute such as are, at the same time, advantageous to the public; and that every regulation intended to force industry into particular channels, or to determine the species of com-

mercial intercourse to be carried on between different parts of the same country, or between distant and independent countries, is impolitic and pernicious.\* Such are the leading features of a work, which, though not without some errors of doctrine, was far before the general sense of the age in which it appeared, and must ever be considered as one of the noblest productions of the human intellect.

EDMUND BURKE (1730-1797), distinguished as a statesman, may be ranked with the miscellaneous writers of this period, on account of his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, which appeared in 1757, and from the elegance of its language, and the spirit of philosophical investigation which it displayed, at once raised its author to the first class among writers on topics of taste and criticism. The hypothesis maintained in this treatise is, that the principal source of the sublime is terror, or some sensation resembling it, and that beauty is that quality, or the results of those qualities in objects, by which they excite love, or some similar affection. The splendid talents and acquirements of Burke were employed, during the remainder of his life, almost exclusively in the business of a parliamentary career, the only literary product of which was a series of speeches, which will ever rank amongst the best effusions of the oratorical genius of our country. He also published, in 1790, a pamphlet entitled, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in which, though a member of the Whig party, he took the most unfavourable view of the changes then advancing in the neighbouring kingdom, and pleaded the cause of ancient institutions with great force of argument, and still greater felicity of illustration, though not without leaving room for a very powerful answer from another writer.

One of the greatest productions of this period was the *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, published in 1765, by SIR WILLIAM BLACKSTONE, afterwards a judge

\* M'Culloch's *Principles of Political Economy*, 2d edit. p. 57.

of the Court of King's Bench. In this book, which continues to be the standard work upon the subject, the spirit of the English government and laws is expounded in a philosophical manner, and with an union of research, accuracy, and elegance, worthy of the highest praise, but at the same time with a servile respect for technical rules, more characteristic of the lawyer than of the philosopher, and with less regard for the real merit of laws and institutions in general, than for their antiquity. A revisal of Blackstone's *Commentaries*, which should accommodate them to the practice of constitutional and municipal law in the present day, and to the enlarged spirit of the nation, is very desirable. The essays, correspondence, and autobiography of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790), a native of America, form a valuable portion of the miscellaneous literature of the period. While he benefited his species by discoveries in electricity, and improvements in mechanics, as well as by high political services, this excellent man possessed a vein of sagacious observation and dry humour, which fitted him to take a respectable rank among the essayists of the eighteenth century. His life, written by himself, displays such an example of industry, self-cultivation, and true goodness, as cannot fail to improve every young person who peruses it. Philip Dormer Stanhope, EARL OF CHESTERFIELD (1694-1773), was an elegant author, though his only popular compositions are his *Letters to his Son*, a work containing many excellent advices for the cultivation of the mind and improvement of the external worldly character, but greatly deficient in the higher points of morality. SOAME JENYNS (1704-1787) was distinguished in early life as a gay and witty writer, both in poetry and prose; but afterwards applying himself to serious subjects, he produced, in 1757, *A Free Enquiry into the Nature of Evil*; in 1776, a *View of the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion*; and in 1782, *Disquisitions on various subjects*; works containing much ingenious speculation, but which have lost most of their early popularity.

One of the most eminent cultivators of miscellaneous literature during this period was HORACE WALPOLE (1718–1797), who, at the close of a long life, succeeded a nephew in the title of Earl of Orford. *A Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*, published in 1758, and *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, two volumes, 1761, are, with his *Castle of Otranto*, already noticed, the chief works of Walpole which appeared during his lifetime; but several large collections of letters, and a *History of the last ten years of the reign of George II.*, edited since his death, are more valuable, the former, in particular, being full of lively and amusing descriptions of the manners and characters of the eighteenth century. Personally, and also in his manner of writing, Walpole was eccentric and heartless; but the ease, pungency, and brilliancy of his style, independently of their historical value, will long keep his works before the public eye. He spent the greater part of his life in a villa called Strawberry Hill, which he built and furnished in his favourite Gothic manner, and which is still visited as a curiosity.

It is here necessary to advert to a series of political epistles, which appeared in a London newspaper during the years 1769, 1770, and 1771, and which, from the signature attached to them, are usually called the *Letters of Junius*. They chiefly aimed at exposing the aggressions which the crown was at that time supposed to be making upon the national liberties; but, in performing this task, the writer did not scruple to satirize both the king and his supporters. He displayed such powers of keen, yet delicate sarcasm, such dexterity in parrying and retorting the attacks of his adversaries, and so masterly a knowledge of the English constitution, as, joined to the brilliancy and polish of his style, gave to his compositions the character of a standard work, which they have ever since retained. The writer of these letters had no personal communication with the individual who published them; he seems to have formed the resolution of keeping the secret of their authorship from the world, and of allowing it to perish with

him. Accordingly, though attempts have been made to trace them to various individuals, the author must still be considered as unknown.

Overlooking one comparatively obscure work, the *Cyclopædia* of EPHRAIM CHAMBERS, published in 1728, in two folio volumes, was the first dictionary or repertory of general knowledge published in Britain. Chambers, who had been reared to the business of a globe-maker, and was a man of respectable, though not profound attainments, died in 1740. His work was printed five times during the subsequent eighteen years, and has finally been extended, in the present century, under the care of DR ABRAHAM REES, to forty volumes in quarto. DR JOHN CAMPBELL (1708-1775), whose share in compiling the *Universal History* has already been spoken of, began in 1742 to publish his *Lives of the British Admirals*, and three years later, commenced the *Biographia Britannica*; works of considerable magnitude, and which still possess a respectable reputation. The reign of George II. produced many other attempts to familiarize knowledge; but it seems only necessary to allude to one of these, the *Preceptor* of ROBERT DODSLEY, first published in 1748, and which long continued to be a favourite and useful book. It embraced within the compass of two volumes, in octavo, treatises on elocution, composition, arithmetic, geography, logic, moral philosophy, human life and manners, and a few other branches of knowledge, then supposed to form a complete course of education. Dodsley, though only the editor of this work, was an original writer of some ability: originally a footman, he rose by his own exertions to be a respectable publisher, and was the author of a small moral work still popular, entitled the *Economy of Human Life*, and of a favourite farce, called the *King and the Miller of Mansfield*.

The age under notice may be termed the epoch of Magazines and Reviews. The earliest work of the former kind, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, commenced in the year 1731, by Mr Edward Cave, a printer, was at first, simply,

a monthly condensation of newspaper discussions and intelligence, but in the course of a few years, became open to the reception of literary and archaeological articles. The term magazine thus gradually departed from its original meaning as a depository of extracts from newspapers, till it was understood to refer to monthly miscellanies of literature, such as it is now habitually applied to. The design of Mr Cave was so successful, that it soon met with rivalry, though it was some time before any other work obtained sufficient encouragement to be continued for any lengthened period. The *Literary Magazine*, started in 1735 by Mr Ephraim Chambers, subsisted till about the close of the century. The *London Magazine*, the *British Magazine*, and the *Town and Country Magazine*, were other works of the same kind, published with more or less success, during the reigns of George II. and George III. In 1739, the *Scots Magazine* was commenced in Edinburgh, upon a plan nearly similar to the *Gentleman's*; it survived till 1826, and forms a valuable register of the events of the times over which it extends. In the old magazines, there is little trace of that anxiety for literary excellence which now animates the conductors of such miscellanies; yet, from the notices which they contain, respecting the characters, incidents, and manners of former years, they are generally very entertaining. The *Gentleman's Magazine* continues to be published, and retains much of its early distinction as a literary and archaeological repository.

Periodical works, devoted exclusively to the criticism of new books, were scarcely known in Britain till 1749, when the *Monthly Review* was commenced under the patronage of the Whig and Low Church party. This was followed, in 1756, by the establishment of the *Critical Review*, which for some years was conducted by Dr Smollett, and was devoted to the interests of the Tory party in church and state. These productions, conducted with no great ability, were the only publications of the kind previous to the commencement of the *British Critic* in 1793.



Another respectable and useful periodical work was originated in 1758, by Robert Dodsley, under the title of the *Annual Register*; the plan being suggested, it is said, by the celebrated Burke, who, for some years, wrote the historical portion with his usual ability. This work, and a rival called the *New Annual Register*, commenced some years later, are still published.

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#### SEVENTH PERIOD.

##### FROM 1780 DOWNWARDS.

IN the progress of literature, it would almost seem a fixed law that an age of vigorous original writing, and an age of imitation and repetition, should regularly follow each other. Authors possessed of strong original powers make so great an impression on public taste—their names, their styles, their leading ideas, become so exclusively objects of admiration and esteem, that for some time there is an intolerance of every thing else; new writers find it convenient rather to compete with the preceding in their own walks, than to strike-out into novel paths; and it is not perhaps, until a considerable change has been wrought upon society, or at least until men begin to tire of a constant reproduction of the same imagery and the same modes of composition, that a fresh class of inventive minds is allowed to come into operation—who, in their turn, exercise the same control over those who are to succeed them. The period between 1727 and 1780, which was the subject of the foregoing section, may be said to have been the age of the followers of Dryden, Pope, Swift, and Addison; it was an era devoted to a refining upon the styles of those men and their contemporaries, and produced comparatively little that was strikingly new. Towards the close of the century, the vein would appear to have been exhausted; the subject of artificial manners had been

fully treated ; the sounding and delicately measured composition, which originated in the days of Queen Anne, had been carried to its utmost pitch of perfection ; the public began to grow weary of a literature which aimed at nothing which was novel, either in matter or in form ; and the time had come for a change. Accordingly, there now arose a series of writers, who, professing to be in a great measure independent of rule in the selection of themes and styles, sought to impress or to please their readers by whatever of new, in thought or sentiment, imagery or narrative, they were able to throw into a literary form. Relieved from the formalities which oppressed both polite life and polite literature during the eighteenth century ; encouraged by the free and inquiring spirit which was at the same time animating men in their political and social affairs ; the individuals who cultivated letters at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, were characterised by the vigour and novelty of their descriptions and narratives, by a high sense of the beautiful both in nature and in art, by a boldness of imagination unknown since the days of Elizabeth, and a desire rather to expound those feelings and affections which form the groundwork of man's character and moral condition, than to dwell on the trivial and accidental peculiarities which constitute his external manners. Even in the language of these writers, there was an ease and volubility which could not fail to be distinguished by the most careless reader from the stiff and neatly adjusted paragraphs of their predecessors : it almost appeared that formality, precision, and pomp, were dismissed at the time of the French Revolution from the ideas and words, as well as from the dresses of men. It is indeed to be remarked that, in no delineation of any elevated poetical scene, either painted or written, during the eighteenth century, does the artist or writer seem to have been able to shake off the formal costumes which were then prescribed by fashion to all above the meanest rank. The noblest personages of antiquity seem to wear the wigs,

brocade, and stately manners of the court of George the Second. The most sublime conceptions of natural and artificial objects, bear marks of the prevailing taste in gardening and architecture. It was not until the epoch at which we have now arrived, that poets, painters, and players, adopted language, dress, and scenery, suitable to the objects and the times which they desired to represent.

#### POETS.

The above general remarks on the literature of the age apply with peculiar force to the department of poetry, which is not only a conspicuous branch of the belles lettres, but that which usually gives a character to all the rest. It is generally allowed that a disposition to depart from the polished and formal style of versification which prevailed during the preceding period, owed its rise, in no small measure, to the several collections of traditional poetry which appeared during the eighteenth century. A panegyric criticism on the ballad of Chevy Chase, which Addison published in the Spectator, is allowed to have been the first instance of any specimen of that kind of poetry being noticed with commendation by a scholarly writer. In 1765, DR THOMAS PERCY (afterwards Bishop of Dromore) gave to the world the extensive collection entitled *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, which may be described as having been the more immediate means of awakening a taste for the unaffected strains of simple narrative and genuine passion. This work contains a great variety of those ballads, which, though perhaps partly originated by the early professional poets called minstrels, have so long existed as a legendary literature among the common people, that they may almost be considered as the composition of that portion of the community, of whose tastes and forms of thought and feeling they are an almost express record. The romantic incidents which they commemorate, the strong natural pathos

with which they abound, and the simple forms of the diction and versification, enabled these ballads, when brought before the literary world, to make a powerful impression; but as professional persons are always latest to acknowledge improvements in those matters which respectively concern them, it was not till a decided change had been wrought in the public taste, that modern literature was much affected by them. Another large collection was published in 1777, by a bookseller named Evans; and in 1800, an equally extensive body of Scottish traditional poetry was published by Mr Walter Scott, under the title of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Towards the close of the century, a marked effect was produced by the publications of Percy and Evans upon the forms and styles of poetry, being chiefly observable in the compositions of Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth. But before that time there had appeared several eminent poets, whose compositions betrayed that a breaking up of the old style had already commenced.

The most distinguished of these was WILLIAM COWPER (1731–1800), a gentleman originally educated for the law, but who, from some constitutional weaknesses, occasionally affecting his reason, retired in the prime of life to reside with a private family in the country, where, till his fiftieth year, he seems to have been hardly conscious of possessing the gift of poetry. His first volume, containing pieces entitled *Table Talk*, *Hope*, *The Progress of Error*, and others, appeared in 1782; two years later he published a long poem, entitled *The Task*; and he subsequently gave to the world a translation of Homer in blank verse. The whole of his works were written between the years 1780 and 1792, which may be described as only a lucid interval in a life, the greater part of which was the prey of a diseased melancholy. The most conspicuous peculiarity of Cowper's poetry is the unaffected and unrestrained expression of his own feelings, enjoyments, and reflections, all of which, as it happens, are of a kind calculated to engage the attention, and awaken the sympathies of the reader. 'His

language,' says Campbell, 'has such a masculine idiomatic strength, and his manner, whether he rises into grace, or falls into negligence, has so much plain and familiar freedom, that we read no poetry with a deeper conviction of its sentiments having come from the author's heart; and of the enthusiasm, in whatever he describes, having been unfeigned. \* \* He blends the determination of age with an exquisite and ingenuous sensibility; and though he sports very much with his subjects, yet when he is in earnest, there is a gravity of long-felt conviction in his sentiments, which gives an uncommon ripeness of character to his poetry.' Cowper, without condescending to personalities, was a great moral satirist; and among his other characteristics, was a rich yet chastened humour, which pervades most of his writings, and constitutes the entire merit of his well-known tale of *John Gilpin*. His works are strongly tinged with religious feeling, and also with the melancholy which so greatly embittered his existence. He excels in descriptions of the quiet felicity of domestic life, and this, apparently, because he himself so greatly enjoyed its pleasures. The following extract from the fourth book of *The Task*, is a specimen of his best manner:—

## WINTER.

I crown thee king of intimate delights,  
Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,  
And all the comforts that the lowly roof  
Of undisturbed Retirement, and the hours  
Of long, uninterrupted evening, know.  
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;  
No powdered pert proficient in the art  
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors  
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds  
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,  
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:  
But here the needle plies its busy task,  
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,  
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
Unfolds its blossom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,  
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,

Follow the nimble finger of the fair ;  
 A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers, that blow  
 With most success when all besides decay.  
 The poet's or historian's page by one  
 Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest ;  
 The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds  
 The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out ;  
 And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,  
 And in the charming strife triumphant still ;  
 Beguile the night, and set a keener edge  
 On female industry : the threaded steel  
 Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.  
 The volume closed, the customary rites  
 Of the last meal commence,—a Roman meal ;  
 Such as the mistress of the world once found  
 Delicious, when her patriots of high note,  
 Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,  
 And under an old oak's domestic shade,  
 Enjoyed, spare feast ! a radish and an egg.  
 Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,  
 Nor such as with a frown forbids the play  
 Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth :  
 Nor do we madly, like an impious world,  
 Who deem religion frenzy, and the God  
 That made them, an intruder on their joys,  
 Start at his awful name, or deem his praise  
 A jarring note ; themes of a graver tone,  
 Exciting oft our gratitude and love,  
 While we retrace, with memory's pointing wand  
 That calls the past to our exact review,  
 The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,  
 The disappointed foe, deliverance found  
 Unlooked for, life preserved, and peace restored—  
 Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.  
 O evenings worthy of the gods ! exclaimed  
 The Sabine bard. O evenings, I reply,  
 More to be prized and coveted than yours,  
 As more illumined, and with nobler truths,  
 That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.

ERASMUS DARWIN (1732–1802), a physician at Lichfield, gained a high but temporary reputation, by the publication of a poem entitled *The Botanic Garden*, which was given to the world in detached portions between the years 1781 and 1792. It consisted of an allegorical ex-

position of the Linnæan system of plants. The ingenuity and novelty of many of its personifications, and its brilliant and figurative language, caused this work at first to be looked on as the foundation of a new era in poetry; but its unvarying polish, and want of human interest, rapidly reduced its reputation. In 1793 Darwin published a prose treatise entitled *Zoonomia*, in which a fanciful view was taken of the laws of organic life. Some works, in which attempts were made to give the charms of poetry and allegory to scientific subjects, appeared immediately before and after his death. He is now condemned to neglect, and perhaps with justice; but his daring metaphor, and originality of manner, were certainly of some avail in reawakening the spirit of genuine poetry.

Among others who, in the early part of the period under notice, departed from the style of the former age, was GEORGE CRABBE (1754-1832). He was in early life a surgeon and apothecary at the sea-port of Aldborough in Suffolk, but afterwards took clerical orders, and spent the greater part of his life in performing the duties of a country rector. This individual seems to have been originally less gifted with those powers of imagination which form a chief ingredient in poetry, than with the talent of making accurate and minute observations of the realities of life. It early occurred to him, that if the characters of rustic society were painted in their actual lineaments, without the elevation and embellishment which the poetry of all ages had given to them, the result would be something strikingly novel, and not destitute of a moral use. *The Village*, a poem in two books, published in 1782, was formed upon this plan; and its correct, though sometimes unseemly descriptions, made a strong impression upon the public mind. It was followed, in 1785, by a short poem entitled *The Newspaper*; after which, for many years, Mr Crabbe devoted himself to his clerical duties, and to theological study. In 1807, he reappeared before the literary world with *The Parish Register*, a longer composition than either of the preceding, but devoted to the same unflatter-

ing views of rural life. *The Borough* (1810), *Tales in Verse* (1812), and *Tales of the Hall* (1819), were poetical works of considerable magnitude, published by Mr Crabbe during his lifetime ; and a third series of *Tales* appeared after his death. The literary character of Crabbe is that of a stern, but accurate delineator of human nature, in its less pleasing aspects and less happy circumstances : he loved to follow out the history of vice and misery in all their obscure windings, and to appal and melt his readers by the most startling pictures of woe. Care must be taken to keep in mind that his writings do not present a just view of human nature and human life *on the whole* ; for a mistake of this kind might lead such of his readers as possess little knowledge of the world into a great error. With all his severity, he has much tenderness ; and it must excite our surprise that this quality is more apparent in his later than in his earlier poems. His works are also distinguished throughout by very high moral aims.

The next great ornament of our poetical literature was ROBERT BURNS (1759–1796), a native of Ayrshire, in Scotland, and reared to the laborious profession of a farmer. With the advantage of a plain education, and access to a few books, the mind of this highly-gifted individual received a degree of cultivation, much superior to what is attainable in the same grade of society in other countries ; and, at an early age, he began to write in his vernacular language verses respecting rural events and characters. Models, as far as he required any, he found in the poetry of Ramsay and Fergusson, and in that great body of national song, comic and sentimental, which the Scottish people have composed for themselves in the course of ages. A volume which he published in his native district in 1786, attracted the admiration of the learned and polished society of Edinburgh, and his reputation soon spread to England, and to all other countries where his diction was intelligible. The vigorous thought, the felicitous expression, the pathos, the passion, which characterise the poetry of Burns, have



since established him as one of the British classics, or standard authors. During the latter years of his life, he employed his poetical talent chiefly in the composition of a series of songs, which, though they have the general fault of treating love with too little regard for its higher and more delicate emotions, are allowed to rank among the best compositions in that department of poetry. His latter years, as must be generally known, were clouded with poverty and its attendant distresses, aggravated by passions, which, equally with his genius, formed a part of the extraordinary character assigned to him by nature. After his death, his works, including poems, songs, and letters, were published in an elegant collection by Dr James Currie, of Liverpool, who added a biographical memoir, remarkable for judgment and good taste.

In the same year with the first publication of Burns, an *Ode to Superstition and other Poems*, proceeded from the pen of SAMUEL ROGERS, a banker in London, who, by his subsequent writings, has attained an eminent place in literature. *The Pleasures of Memory*, by which he is best known, appeared in 1792; in polish and harmony it equals the best productions of the preceding period, while it contains pictures of sufficient freshness, and remarks and sentiments of sufficient animation, to place it amongst the best productions of the modern race of versifiers. *The Voyage of Columbus* (1812), *Jacqueline, a Tale* (1814), *Human Life* (1819), and *Italy, a Poem* (1822), are the other works of Mr Rogers, who, unlike most of his contemporaries, seems to have been more studious of the quality than of the quantity of his productions. The power of touching the finer feelings, and of describing visible and mental objects with truth and effect, a happy choice of expression, and a melodious flow of verse, are the principal characteristics of this author.

One of the most striking distinctions of the poets of the present, as contrasted with those of the past age, consists in the greater variety of their styles, both of thought and language: Cowper, Darwin, Crabbe, Burns, and Rogers,

are all very different from each other, and he whom we are now to notice, is not less peculiar. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850) received an excellent education, and retired at an early period of life to a cottage amidst the lakes of Cumberland, in order to cultivate his poetical talents. Two small volumes, published in 1793, containing poems entitled *The Evening Walk*, and *Descriptive Sketches*, were the first fruits of his genius; they remind the reader of the poetry of Goldsmith, though with a vein of feeling which is not to be found in that author. It was not until 1798, when Mr Wordsworth published a volume entitled *Lyrical Ballads*, that he first displayed examples of that peculiar theory of poetry by which he has so much distinguished himself. Two volumes of *Poems* in 1807, *The Excursion* (1814), *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815), and *Sonnets* (1820), are the chief productions of this writer which remain to be noticed. On the death of Mr Southey in 1843, the acknowledged chiefship of Wordsworth among the English bards was marked by his receiving the appointment of poet-laureate.

The principal object which Mr Wordsworth proposed to himself in his early poems, was to choose incidents and situations from ordinary life, and to relate or describe them in the language commonly used by men; at the same time, investing them with a certain colouring of the imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and it was his aim further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting, by tracing in them the primary laws of our nature. Fifty years have now shewn, with sufficient clearness, that, as far as this theory was to be exemplified by verses in which ordinary events and thoughts are expressed in ordinary language, it was not qualified to give pleasure to any reader; such writings being, in effect, little better or more attractive than the common talk of the streets or fields. But though some of Mr Wordsworth's compositions

exhibit these features more exclusively than others, the greater number, especially of those which he wrote in later life, while generally referring to unimportant actions and situations, are so charged with the profound poetical feeling of the author, contain so much meditative thought, and are so enriched with the hues of a wonderful imagination, that, with minds of a certain order, there is no modern poet who stands higher, or bids so fairly for immortality. His *Excursion*, which is only part of a larger and unpublished work, entitled *The Recluse*, is one of the noblest philosophical poems in our language; containing views at once comprehensive and simple, of man, nature, and society, and combining the finest sensibilities with the richest fancy. Nor can any poems more deeply touching be found, than 'The Fountain,' 'Ruth,' 'We are Seven,' 'The Complaint of the Indian,' and others of his minor pieces. He indeed possessed, in an eminent degree, the grand qualification of a poet, as described by himself, 'a promptness greater than what is possessed by ordinary men, to think and feel without immediate excitement, and a greater power of expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner.' And, with regard to his much controverted doctrine, the propriety of using common language, instead of the ornamental diction usually adopted for verse, it may be said that he was himself an involuntary breaker of his own rule; for there is no poet who oftener gives a charm to his writings by the use of some extraordinary, and yet appropriate phraseology.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1773-1834), a native of Ottery St Mary, in Devonshire, and educated in Christ's Hospital, London, and Jesus College, Cambridge, was one of those who formed what was called the *Lake School*. He began to publish verses in 1794, but, for some years after that period, was chiefly engaged in political compositions. An undue devotion to the study of metaphysics and of German literature, seems to have early blighted the genius of this poet, whose powers both of imagination and of expression, are among the highest that have been

known in the present age. There is scarcely one of his poems which is not in some respect imperfect or deformed, and it is only in a few particular passages that he appears in his native and genuine lustre. The unfinished production called *Christabel*, a fragment entitled *Genevieve*, the tale of *The Ancient Mariner*, and his *Ode to Mount Blanc*, may be instanced as the finest portions of his writings.

The decade between 1790 and 1800 added a greater number of brilliant names to our literature than perhaps any former space of the same extent; the political agitation which then prevailed, being probably the means of awakening some minds which might have otherwise remained inert. In the number who seem to have been stirred by the exciting events of that day, we must reckon Wordsworth, Coleridge, and also ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774-1843), a poet of the first rank, though he never attained great popularity. Born in Bristol, and endowed with a liberal education, he published his first poetical volume in 1795, when only twenty-one years of age: it contained the masterly epic, entitled *Joan of Arc*. About the same time, he gave to the world a dramatic poem called *Wat Tyler*, which has been considered by some as an argument for principles of liberty and equality in their utmost latitude. Mr Southey was at this early period an enthusiastic admirer of the contemporary revolution in France, and, in company with his friend Coleridge and a Mr Lovel, projected the establishment of a philosophical government on the banks of the Susquehanna; a scheme which was broken up by the marriage of the young men to three sisters, resident in Bath. Messrs Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey afterwards embraced, with equal enthusiasm, the opposite side of politics. Mr Southey's principal poems, subsequent to a collection of minor pieces in 1799, were *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1803), *Metrical Tales* (1804), *Madoc* (1805), *The Curse of Kehama* (1811), *Roderick the Last of the Goths* (1814), and *A Vision of*

*Judgment* (1821); besides which, he wrote many prose works of distinguished excellence. Having in 1801 obtained a pension of £200 for acting a short while as secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ireland, Mr Southey retired to a sequestered villa near Keswick in Cumberland, and devoted himself to the life of a man of letters. In 1813, his income was increased by his obtaining the situation of poet-laureate, which then, for the first time since the days of Dryden, was held by a man of eminent abilities. In his *Thalaba* and *Kehama*, Mr Southey developed the more striking of his poetical powers; which consist in the delineation of characters hovering on the verge of the natural, or altogether transcending it, whom he leads through scenes of more than earthly beauty and terror, filling the mind of the reader with wild and agitating images, but at the expense of all influence over his sympathies. In his more familiar poems, his invention becomes comparatively languid, but his power over the attention of the reader is increased. The verse which he employs in *Thalaba* is an unrhymed lyrical stanza, entirely of his own invention, and which adds greatly to the effect. In his poetical style, in the choice of his subjects, in his language, and its structure, he is alike original: he resembles in no respect any preceding poet, and no one seems to have yet found it possible to make him an object of imitation. The following characteristic passage, extracted from his *Joan of Arc*, is a description of a scene presented to that heroine, in a supposed visit to the regions of eternal punishment.

THE MURDERERS OF MANKIND.

They entered there a large and lofty dome,  
O'er whose black marble sides a dim drear light  
Struggled with darkness from the unfrequent lamp.  
Enthroned around, the *murderers of mankind*—  
Monarchs, the great! the glorious! the august!  
Each bearing on his brow a crown of fire,  
Sat stern and silent. Nimrod, he was there,  
First king, the mighty hunter; and that chief  
Who did belie his mother's fame, that so

He might be called young Ammon. In this court  
 Cæsar was crowned—accursed liberticide ;  
 And he who murdered Tully, that cold villain  
 Octavius—though the courtly minion's lyre  
 Hath hymned his praise, though Maro sang to him.  
 Titus was here, the conqueror of the Jews,  
 He the delight of human kind misnamed ;  
 Cæsars and Soldans, emperors and kings,  
 Here were they all, all who for glory fought,  
 Here in the *Court of Glory*, reaping now  
 The meed they merited.

The next of the great modern poets is THOMAS CAMPBELL (1777–1844), a native of Glasgow, and pupil of the university of that city. In 1799, when only twenty-two years of age, he published his *Pleasures of Hope*, which immediately took its rank as one of the finest sentimental poems in the language. *Gertrude of Wyoming*, a tale in the Spenserian stanza (1809), *Theodric*, a tale (1824), *The Pilgrim of Glencoe* (1842), and some lyrical pieces, complete the list of his poetical productions. The *Pleasures of Hope*, though deformed by a few of the bombastical thoughts and tinsel expressions which young poets are apt to use, is a noble effusion of ardent and elevated feeling, embodying much fine precept, and many affecting views of human life. In *Gertrude*, the ardour is softened, and a more gentle and pensive style assumed. Overlooking *Theodric* and the *Pilgrim of Glencoe*, which are considered as failures, his lyrical pieces may be described as perhaps the most successful efforts of the genius of Campbell. Those entitled 'Ye Mariners of England,' and 'The Battle of the Baltic,' but particularly the former, are truly national songs, and highly qualified to awaken the sympathies of the people. Excepting in these productions, and in some of the passages of his earliest poem, the poetical character of Campbell may be described, in the words of a periodical critic, as 'refined, elegant, and tranquil, abounding in delicate traits, appealing to the softer emotions, with a tenderness almost feminine ; fluent and gentle as a melody, polished like a rare gem, and

betraying the influence of a taste approaching the limits of extreme fastidiousness.' As a characteristic specimen of Campbell, the following may be presented :—

THE HOPE OF THE POOR MAN.

And mark the wretch whose wanderings never knew  
The world's regard, that soothes, though half-untrue;  
Whose erring heart the lash of sorrow bore,  
But found not pity when it erred no more :—  
Yon friendless man, at whose dejected eye  
The unfeeling proud one looks—and passes by,—  
Condemned on Penury's barren path to roam,  
Scorned by the world, and left without a home,—  
Even he, at evening, should he chance to stray  
Down by the hamlet's hawthorn-scented way,  
Where round the cot's romantic glade are seen  
The blossomed bean-field, and the sloping green,  
Leans o'er its humble gate, and thinks the while,  
Oh ! that for me some home like this would smile !  
Some hamlet-shade, to yield my sickly form,  
Health in the breeze, and shelter in the storm !  
Here should my hand no stinted boon assign  
To wretched hearts with sorrow such as mine !—  
That generous wish can sooth unpitied care,  
And hope half mingles with the poor man's prayer.

The poetry of Campbell was in the height of its popularity, and Wordsworth, Southey, and others, were contending not very successfully with the adverse taste of the day, when WALTER SCOTT (1771–1832), a Scottish barrister, commenced a poetical career of unexampled prosperity. Scott had stored his mind with antiquarian and miscellaneous knowledge, and caught a taste for romance from some specimens of modern German literature, and from the ballad poetry of his native land. With these qualifications, joined to great readiness of versification, and a portion of fancy and feeling which never exceeded the limits assigned by good sense, he commenced the composition of a series of metrical tales, in which he succeeded to a wonderful extent in charming his readers by a revival of the manners, incidents, and sentiments of

chivalrous times. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion* (1808), *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), and *The Lord of the Isles* (1814), refer to various periods of Scottish history; while *Rokeby* (1812), is a tale of the English civil wars of the seventeenth century. These poems were received with an avidity for which there was no parallel in English literary history, twenty-five thousand copies of the first being sold in six years.

The verse adopted by Mr Scott was a short irregular measure, similar to that of the early minstrels, of whose works, indeed, his might be styled a kind of revival or imitation. This verse he wrote with singular fluency and animation, though not without the occasional admission of a bald and ineffective stanza. As a strictly narrative poet, he did not attempt to melt the feelings like Campbell, or to awaken meditative thought like Wordsworth, or to lead the mind into wild and supernatural regions like Southey; he only endeavoured to entertain the great bulk of mankind with such a relation of probable, though romantic events, as they might be supposed capable of appreciating. The *poetry* of his writings expressly consists in the feeling which he excites in association with those events—a feeling of admiration and wonder, which we are apt to entertain for everything connected with the past, but especially for the former circumstances of that which is still before our eyes. He perceived that the romantic periods of Scottish history were not yet so remote as to have lost their interest—that, indeed, the country still contained communities who bore, in their language, dress, and ideas, the most vivid traces of a former and ruder state of things; and it was by a judicious use of the materials thus furnished to him, and by a skilful reference from the past to the present, and from the present to the past, that he succeeded so well in his poetical undertakings. He was also much indebted to his extraordinary power of description, a talent which was never possessed in a superior degree by any poet.

Mr Scott was beginning to experience a slight decline



of popularity, when his reputation was nearly altogether eclipsed by that of LORD BYRON (1788-1824), who, after some early and less happy efforts, published the first canto of his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in 1812, and immediately took the first place in the ranks of the poets. The narrative of this poem describes a young libertine, who, satiated with pleasure, and sunk in listlessness and misanthropy, endeavours to solace himself by wandering into foreign countries. It is constructed in the Spenserian stanza, which suits admirably well with the sombre and contemplative character of the poem. The splendid descriptions and noble meditations contained in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and the supposed identity of the hero with the poet, excited at once admiration and curiosity. It was followed by poems entitled *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair* and *Lara* (1814), *Hebrew Melodies* and *The Siege of Corinth* (1815), a third canto of *Childe Harold* and *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816), *Manfred*, a dramatic poem, and *The Lament of Tasso* (1817), a fourth and concluding canto of *Childe Harold*, and *Beppo*, a comic tale of modern Italian life (1818), *Mazeppa*, and the commencement of a licentious, but witty and humorous tale, entitled *Don Juan* (1819); after which he chiefly employed himself in writing dramatic poetry, and in extending the poem last mentioned, which ultimately was broken off at the sixteenth canto. The personal character of Lord Byron was an extraordinary mixture of benevolence and misanthropy, and of aspirations after excellence, with a practical enslavement to degrading vices. The only key to the mystery is to be found in that theory which represents the temperament of genius, in its extreme forms, as a species of insanity.

The poetry of Byron may be generally described as a representation of his own turbid feelings, sometimes in his own person, and sometimes in the persons of ideal characters; all of whom, however, resemble himself. To use the words of a distinguished critic,—‘he delights in the delineation of a certain morbid exaltation of character and

of feeling—a sort of demoniacal sublimity. He is haunted almost perpetually with the image of a being feeding upon, and fed by violent passions, and the recollections of the catastrophes they have occasioned ; and, though worn out by their past indulgence, unable to sustain the burden of an existence which they do not continue to animate—full of pride and revenge and obstinacy, disdaining life and death, and mankind and himself, and trampling in his scorn, not only upon the falsehood and formality of polished life, but upon its tame virtues ; yet envying, by fits, the selfish beings he despises, and melting into mere softness and compassion when the helplessness of childhood, or the frailty of woman, make an appeal to his generosity. Beings such as this are Childe Harold, and Lara, and Manfred, and almost every hero delineated by Byron, and such, unfortunately, was he himself. In those compositions where he attempts to describe, or give expression to any other kind of person, he comparatively fails ; hence the dulness of his tragedies.

If Mr Wordsworth's theory be correct, that the poet ought to be a person who can intuitively conceive, and eloquently express, the thoughts and feelings of all orders of his fellow-creatures, the poetry of Byron, limited as it is to the description of one being, and that an unnatural, or at least an uncommon one, cannot be ranked among the highest. But such is the interest which his intense personal feeling has given to this character, that the attention of the public has been more forcibly arrested by it than by all the thoughts and feelings which other poets have breathed for the whole circle of their kind. It is to be observed, moreover, that if Byron be limited in character, he is not limited in any of the other elements of poetry. We find in him, according to the critic just quoted, 'a perpetual stream of quick-coming fancies—an eternal spring of fresh-blown images, which seem called into existence by the sudden flash of those glowing thoughts and overwhelming emotions, that struggle for expression through the whole flow of his poetry, and impart to a

diction that is often abrupt and irregular, a force and a charm which seem frequently to realize all that is said of inspiration.'

As a specimen of the gloomy, yet elevated melancholy of Byron, we may present his

APOSTROPHE TO THE OCEAN.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll !  
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain ;  
 Man marks the earth with ruin—his control  
 Stops with the shore ;—upon the watery plain  
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain  
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,  
 When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,  
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,  
 Without a grave, unknelt, unconfined, and unknown.  
 His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields  
 Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise  
 And shake him from thee ; the vile strength he wields  
 For earth's destruction, thou dost all despise,  
 Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,  
 And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray,  
 And howling to his gods, where haply lies  
 His petty hope in some near port or bay,  
 And dashest him again to earth :—there let him lay.  
 The armaments which thunder-strike the walls  
 Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,  
 And monarchs tremble in their capitals,  
 The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make  
 Their clay creator the vain title take  
 Of Lord of thee, and arbiter of war ;  
 These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,  
 They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar  
 Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.  
 Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—  
 Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they ?  
 Thy waters wasted them while they were free,  
 And many a tyrant since, their shores obey,—  
 The stranger, slave, or savage ; their decay  
 Has dried up realms to deserts :—not so thou,  
 Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play—  
 Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—  
 Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form  
 Glasses itself in tempests ; in all time,  
 Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,  
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime  
 Dark-heaving ;—boundless, endless, and sublime—  
 The image of Eternity—the throne  
 Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime  
 The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone  
 Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

THOMAS MOORE (1780–1852), a native of Ireland, and a member of the English bar, appeared as a poet before Lord Byron, but did not so soon fix the attention of the world. He published a translation of the Odes of Anacreon, with notes, in 1800, when only twenty years of age ; and in the succeeding year, gave to the public a volume of original poetry, under the fictitious name of Little. This latter work, and a similar volume issued in 1806, were censured for the licentious character of great part of their contents ; and it was not before 1813, when he commenced a series of songs for the melodies of his native country, that he merited and obtained true applause. The *Irish Melodies*, in which Mr Moore was the author of the new poetry, and Sir John Stevenson the harmonizer of the airs, has finally extended to ten numbers, and is one of the most admired and popular works of united music and verse which Britain has produced. The songs of Moore are characterised by a refined gaiety and a sparkling fancy, with little share of the profound passion and tenderness which Burns infused into the same class of compositions. His language is highly epigrammatic, and most dexterously adjusted to the movement of the air and the nature of the sentiment, but with the fault of too obvious an appearance of labour. In 1816, he contributed the poetry required in a musical publication entitled *Sacred Songs, Duets, and Trios*, and in the next year fixed his reputation as one of the first of modern poets, by publishing his *Lalla Rookh*. This is an Oriental tale, or rather a series of tales, conceived in the voluptuous spirit of Asiatic poetry, and replete with the richest Asiatic

imagery. It is said to have produced three thousand pounds to the author. Besides his *Loves of the Angels*, another highly imaginative and brilliant poem, Moore published political satires, and several biographical and historical works in prose. His general characteristics as a poet are summed up when we mention fancy, wit, and lively and pointed expression.

In thus far commemorating the greatest poetical names of the age, we have been obliged to overlook many of less lustre, which may now be brought into view by themselves. The REV. WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES is distinguished as a writer of sonnets, some of which he published so early as 1789. WILLIAM GIFFORD, the author of some sentimental poems of merit, published, in 1794 and 1795, two satires, respectively entitled *The Baviad* and *The Mæviad*, which had the effect of completely extinguishing a generation of trivial versifiers, who at that time usurped the public attention. From the year 1778 till about 1813, a series of pasquinades upon public characters, and more frequently upon the sovereign than on any other person, issued from the pen of DR JOHN WOLCOT, or, as he called himself on his titlepages, Peter Pindar, an individual who, with little of the spirit of genuine poetry, possessed a wonderful fund of humour. His satires, though much superior to most compositions of the same order, have now fallen out of notice, in consequence of the interest respecting the subjects of them having died away.

JAMES MONTGOMERY (1771-1854) is the author of various poetical volumes, the most important of which are entitled *Prison Amusements* (1797), *The Wanderers of Switzerland* (1806), *The West Indies* (1810), *The World before the Flood* (1813), *Greenland* (1819), *Songs of Zion* (1822), and *The Pelican Island* (1827). As a poet he is chiefly characterised by purity and elevation of thought, harmonious versification, and a fine strain of devotional feeling. In 1800, ROBERT BLOOMFIELD, a shoemaker, published a poem entitled *The Farmer's Boy*, which obtained a high reputation, not only on account of

the circumstances under which it had been written, but for its strikingly true and touching delineation of rustic life. In 1803, HENRY KIRKE WHITE, a young man of singularly amiable character, published a poem entitled *Clifton Grove*, but died of the effects of severe study in 1806, when only twenty-one years of age. His poetical remains, published by Mr Southey in three volumes, are chiefly of a moral and devotional character; and, without much energy, are very pleasing. About the time when Mr White published his *Clifton Grove*, JOHN LEYDEN (1775–1811), the son of a Roxburghshire peasant, and a licentiate of the Scottish Church, occasionally employed in versification an intellect for which no kind of study or accomplishment seemed unmeet. His ballads of the *Kout of Keeldar* and *The Mermaid of Colonsay*, published in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, by his friend Sir Walter Scott; his *Scenes of Infancy*, *Verses on an Indian Gold Coin*, and some others; are very favourable specimens of his poetical talent. In 1804, JAMES GRAHAME (1765–1811), an advocate at the Scottish bar, who subsequently became a clergyman of the Church of England, published *The Sabbath*, a poem in blank verse, embodying the many fine associations connected with the day of rest and worship. Though 'the Sabbath' appeared anonymously, and in the most unpretending form, it very soon obtained general approbation; and the author had the pleasure of hearing it recommended to his perusal by his own wife, while she was still unacquainted with the fact of his having written it. Mr Grahame subsequently published poetical volumes entitled, *Sabbath Walks*, *Biblical Pictures*, *The Birds of Scotland*, and *British Georgics*; but though these works contain much devotional feeling, and animated and flowing description, none of them possess the merit of 'the Sabbath.'

Among other minor poets who adorned the early years of the present century, were MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS, who chiefly aimed at raising images of superstitious terror;

the Honourable WILLIAM SPENCER, who confined himself to the composition of light and gay trifles for the amusement of polite society; WILLIAM SOTHEBY, who, besides original poems, favoured the public with an excellent translation of the *Oberon* of the German poet Wieland, and an admirable version of Homer; LEON STRANGFORD, whose translations from the Portuguese poet Camoens (1803), were much admired; REGINALD HEBER, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, author of *Palestine*, a university prize poem (1803), and one of the few such productions which have obtained general applause; and MRS JOHN HUNTER and MRS OPIE, respectively the authoresses of some beautiful lyrical pieces. Having thus brought down the history both of the greater and the lesser poets to the year 1812, we shall proceed to notice those who have since appeared.

JOHN WILSON (1785-1854), a native of Paisley, and for many years Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, appeared as a poet in 1806, when he carried off the Newdegate prize at Oxford; but he did not fix public attention till 1812, when he published his *Isle of Palms, and other Poems*. Excepting his *City of the Plague*, which appeared in 1816, all the rest of his poems have been published in periodical works. Professor Wilson might have attained to greater distinction as a poet, if he had not been induced to devote the most brilliant powers of his mind to fugitive prose writings. On the appearance of his 'Isle of Palms,' he was generally described as a new member of the Lake School of Poetry, but apparently for no other reason than that his genius led him to assume a meditative and ideal style, somewhat resembling theirs. His poetical character is described by a competent critic as consisting of 'a constant glow of kind and pure affection—a great sensibility to the charms of external nature, and the delights of a private, innocent, and contemplative life—a fancy richly stored with images of natural beauty and simple enjoyments—great tenderness and pathos in the representation of sufferings and

sorrow, though almost always calmed, and even brightened, by the healing influences of pitying love, confiding piety, and conscious innocence.' Almost the only passions with which his poetry is conversant, continues this writer, 'are the gentler sympathies of our nature—tender compassion, confiding affection, and guiltless sorrow.' From all these there results, along with a most touching and tranquillising sweetness, a certain monotony and languor, which, to those who read poetry for amusement merely, will be apt to appear like dulness, and must be felt as a defect by all who have been used to the variety, rapidity, and energy of the popular poetry of the day.\*

JAMES HOGG (1771-1835), originally a shepherd in the secluded district of Ettrick in Scotland, after some less successful attempts in verse, produced in 1813 his beautiful poem, or combination of poems, entitled *The Queen's Wake*; followed by two volumes of *Dramatic Tales* (1814), *The Pilgrims of the Sun* (1815), *Queen Hynde* (1825), and other poetical works. Mr Hogg enjoyed the merit of having, from the condition of an unlettered peasant, struggled through many unfavourable and adverse circumstances, into a literary reputation which many men possessing every advantage might well envy. His qualifications as a poet have been described as 'great powers of versification, an unusual copiousness and facility in the use of poetical fiction and imagery, a lively conception of natural beauty, with a quick and prolific fancy to body forth his conceptions.' With these merits, he was said to want that taste which is usually to be gained from a systematic education; and, as might be expected of a poet so constituted, he succeeded best in themes which extend beyond the sphere of natural and ordinary things, where his fancy obtains its freest play, and no images of inferior purity are likely to occur. The public has accordingly decided that the best specimen of his genius is to be found in a tale entitled *Kilmeny* (part of the 'Queen's

\* Edinburgh Review, XXVI. 460.



Wake,') which describes the recollections of a child who had in her sleep been carried away into fairyland, and permitted, after a time, to return for a short period to her mortal pursuits. The power of the poet in supernatural description is there displayed with great delicacy and beauty; and a wild and unearthly charm, totally unlike anything else in the circle of British poetry, is diffused over the whole composition.

A comic poem, entitled *Anster Fair*, was published in 1812 by MR WILLIAM TENNANT, a Scottish schoolmaster, who afterwards became professor of Oriental Languages in the University of St Andrews. It extended to six cantos; and, with a slight thread of story running throughout, was chiefly descriptive of a series of rustic festivities and games, supposed to take place at the village of Anstruther, or Anster, in the sixteenth century. The stanza employed in this poem is of a kind much used by the Italian poets, by whom it is styled the *ottava rima*, from its containing eight lines, but which had not been adopted by the poets of our own country since the time of Elizabeth. With the Italian rhyme, Mr Tennant revived a gay and fantastic humour, peculiar to some of the Italian writers, and in which he has since found no equal, except in the *Beppo* of Lord Byron. The *Edinburgh Review* says, in reference to *Anster Fair*, 'The great charm of this singular composition consists in the profusion of images and groups which it thrusts upon the fancy, and the crowd and hurry and animation with which they are all jostled and driven along; but this, though a very rare merit in any modern production, is entitled perhaps to less distinction than the perpetual sallies and outbreaks of a rich and poetical imagination, by which the homely themes on which the author is professedly employed, are constantly ennobled or contrasted, and in which the ardour of a mind evidently fitted for higher tasks, is somewhat capriciously expended.' A specimen of this poem, in which the fragments of many different verses are huddled together, will serve to enliven these pages of literary and historical detail:—

## THE GATHERING TO ANSTER FAIR.

Comes next from Ross-shire and from Sutherland

- The horny-knuckled kilted Highlandman ;

From where upon the rocky Caithness strand

Breaks the long wave that at the Pole began ;

And where Lochfynes from her prolific sand

Her herrings gives to feed each bord'ring clan,

Arrive the brogue-shod men of gen'rous eye,

Plaided, and breechless all, with Edom's hairy thigh.—

And ev'ry husbandman, round Largo-law,

Hath scraped his huge-wheeled dung-cart fair and clean,

Wherein, on sacks stuffed full of oaten straw,

Sits the goodwife, Tam, Katey, Jock, and Jean ;

In flowers and ribands drest, the horses draw

Stoutly their creaking cumbersome machine,

Aa, on his cart-head, sits the goodman proud,

And cheerily cracks his whip, and whistles clear and loud.—

Then from her coal-pits Dysart vomits forth

Her subterranean men of colour dun,

Poor human mouldwarps ! doomed to scrape in earth,

Cimmerian people, strangers to the sun ;

Gloomy as soot, with faces grim and swarth,

They march, most sourly leering every one.

Next, from the well-air'd ancient town of Crail,

Go out her craftsmen with tumultuous din,

Her wind-bleached fishers, sturdy-limbed and hale,

Her in-kneed tailors, garrulous and thin ;

And some are flushed with horns of pithy ale,

And some are fierce with drams of smuggled gin.

And market-maids, and aproned wives, that bring

Their gingerbread in baskets to the Fair ;

And cadgers with their creels, that hang by string

From their lean horse ribs, rubbing off the hair ;

And crook-legged cripples that on crutches swing

Their shabby persons with a noble air.

Nor only was the land with crowds oppressd,

That trample forward to th' expected Fair ;

The harassed ocean had no peace or rest,

So many keels her foamy bosom tear ;

For, into view, now sailing from the west,

With streamers idling in the bluish air,

Appear the painted pleasure-boats superb.

And red-prowed fisher-boats afar are spied  
 In south-east, tilting o'er the jasper main,  
 Whose wing-like oars, disspread on either side,  
 Now swoop on sea, now ride in sky again.

Mr LEIGH HUNT (1784–1859) published in 1814 a lively and half-satirical poem, entitled *The Feast of the Poets*, and two years after established his reputation by *The Story of Rimini*, a tale of early Italian life, founded on a passage in Dante. He afterwards presented *A Legend of Florence*, and *The Palfrey*; the first a drama, the latter a narrative poem. Mr Hunt formed his style partly on the Italian poets, and partly on our own early writers: he has 'the same fresh, lively, and artless pictures of external manners with the latter writers—the same profusion of gorgeous, but redundant and needless description—the same familiarity, and even homeliness of diction; and, above all, the simplicity and directness in representing actions and passions in colours true to nature, but without any apparent attention to their effect, or any ostentation, or even visible impression as to their moral operation and tendency. *The great distinction between the ancient and modern poets is, that the former painted more from the eye, and less from the mind, than the latter. They described things and actions as they saw them, without expressing, or, at any rate, without dwelling, on the deep-seated emotions from which the objects derived their interest, or the actions their character. The moderns, on the contrary, have brought these prominently forward, and explained and enlarged upon them perhaps at excessive length.* Mr Hunt, in *Rimini*, follows the ancient school; and though he has necessarily gone somewhat beyond the naked notices that would have suited the age of Chaucer, he has kept himself far more to the delineation of visible physical realities than any other modern poet on such a subject.\*

The poetry of Mr Hunt would probably have attained a wider popularity, if it had not been charged with some considerable blemishes, both in expression, and in

\* Edinburgh Review, XXVI. 476.

the selection of subjects. His descriptions of natural scenery are the most unexceptionably pleasing portions of his works: they are marked by a peculiar clearness and freshness, which affect the mind like a picture. As a generally characteristic specimen, we present the concluding passage of Rimini, in which he describes the approach of the funeral party with his dead hero and heroine.

#### THE FUNERAL OF THE LOVERS.

The days were then at close of Autumn still,  
A little rainy, and, towards nightfall, chill;  
There was a fitful, moaning air abroad;  
And ever and anon, over the road,  
The last few leaves came fluttering from the trees,  
Whose trunks now thronged to sight, in dark varieties.  
The people, who from reverence kept at home,  
Listened till afternoon to hear them come;  
And hour on hour went by, and nought was heard  
But some chance horseman, or the wind that stirred,  
Till towards the vesper hour; and then 'twas said  
Some heard a voice, which seemed as if it read;  
And others said that they could hear a sound  
Of many horses trampling the moist ground.  
Still nothing came—till on a sudden, just  
As the wind opened in a rising gust,  
A voice of chanting rose, and as it spread,  
They plainly heard the anthem for the dead.  
It was the choristers who went to meet  
The train, and now were entering the first street.  
Then turned aside that city, young and old,  
And in their lifted hands the gushing sorrow rolled.  
But of the older people, few could bear  
To keep the window, when the train drew near;  
And all felt double tenderness to see  
The bier approaching slow and steadily,  
On which those two in senseless coldness lay,  
Who but a few short months—it seemed a day—  
Had left their walls, lovely in form and mind,  
In sunny manhood he—she first of womankind.  
They say that when Duke Guido saw them come,  
He clasped his hands, and looking round the room,  
Lost his old wits for ever. From the morrow  
None saw him after. But no more of sorrow.

On that same night, those lovers silently  
Were buried in one grave, under a tree ;  
There, side by side, and hand in hand, they lay  
In the green ground : and on fine nights in May  
Young hearts betrothed used to go there to pray.

The next individual who attracted the notice of the public as a poet, was MR PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822), the eldest son of a baronet in Sussex. A poem entitled *Queen Mab*, published without his consent while he was at college, subjected him to much censure, on account of the atheistical opinions contained in it. This, and other circumstances of his life, tended to embitter a mind which seems to have been altogether of an irregular kind, and perhaps prevented his poetical talents from being fully appreciated. His principal publications are,—*The Revolt of Islam* ; *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude* ; *The Cenci, a tragedy* ; *Adonais*, a lament for the death of Mr John Keats ; *Hellas* ; *Prometheus Unbound*. A selection of his best works was published after his death. The greater part of the poetry of Shelley has a mystical grandeur, which alike recommends it to the more enthusiastic lovers of verse, and disqualifies it from giving general pleasure. Some of his smaller pieces, however, have experienced a better reception.

In 1817, MR JOHN KEATS (1796-1820), a youth of obscure birth, who had been educated as a surgeon's apprentice, published a volume of poems, the most of which had been written before he attained the age of twenty. They were hailed by many as giving promise of a very high poetical genius ; and Mr Keats next year published a longer piece entitled *Endymion*, and, in 1820, his *Lamia*, *Isabella*, and other Poems. With some youthful faults, the compositions of Keats possessed many merits. He threw a new, striking, and most poetical feeling upon many of the mythic stories and characters of ancient times ; and his *Eve of St Agnes* is a tale full of rich description and romantic interest. This youthful genius died of consumption, immediately after completing his twenty-fourth year.

In 1820, Mr BRYAN WILLIAM PROCTER, under the fictitious name of Barry Cornwall, published *Marcian Colonna, an Italian Tale, with Three Dramatic Scenes, and other Poems*; since which time he has appeared as a tragic dramatist, and presented several other poetical volumes. His characteristics are, 'a beautiful fancy and a beautiful diction; a fine ear for the music of verse, and great tenderness and delicacy of feeling.'

CHARLES WOLFE (1791-1823), an Irish Protestant clergyman, secured in his brief life a lasting reputation by one small poem, but one of arresting pathos and sublimity, *The Burial of Sir John Moore*. He died of consumption. Such was also the fate of a young Scottish clergyman, ROBERT POLLOK (1799-1827), author of an elaborate poem in blank verse, *The Course of Time*, which has passed through many editions. The object of this composition is to describe the spiritual life and destiny of man: it is full of fine passages, but in many places repels by the stern and harsh tone of its religious spirit. HENRY HART MILMAN, a clergyman of the established Church of England, and professor of poetry in Oxford, is the author of several poetical volumes, chiefly dramatic, which have obtained praise, though not an extensive popularity.

The title of the first song-writer of his age after Moore belonged to Mr THOMAS HAYNES BAYLY (1797-1839), a man of amiable character, born to fortune, but destined to undergo many of the mishaps which so often fall to the lot of poetical genius. An airy, cheerful style of verse, born of the gay manner of the fashionable world, and yet conveying much of the pathos which lurks beneath the most frivolous life, is the leading characteristic of Mr Bayly. The Horatian philosophy of *I'd be a Butterfly*, secured the admiration of the public.

What though you tell me each gay little rover  
Shrinks from the breath of the first autumn day;  
Surely 'tis better, when summer is over,  
To die when all fair things are fading away.

Some in life's winter may toil to discover  
 Means of procuring a weary delay—  
 I'd be a butterfly, living a rover,  
 Dying when fair things are fading away!

A deep interest belongs to the life and poetry of LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON—the 'L. E. L.' of the periodicals of her day—(1802–1838), authoress of *The Improvisatrice*, and several other volumes. With an external manner which seemed gay and volatile, she breathed in her verse the spirit of romantic melancholy. FELICIA HEMANS (1793–1835) obtained equal distinction by her poems, in which we find a similar tone of melancholy, joined to profound tenderness, along with a profusion of beautiful images. There is, however, in the works of both these ladies, a sameness which prevents them from being much read. Another female author of sad history, is the Hon. Mrs NORTON, 'the Byron of modern poetesses.' Her chief works are *The Undying One* (on the story of the Wandering Jew), *The Dream*, and *The Child of the Islands*. MARY HOWITT enjoys a respectable rank in this class, principally on account of her many beautiful ballads. By universal consent, the highest place among living poetesses is assigned to Mrs BROWNING (born Elizabeth Barrett), the wife of the poet Robert Browning. From her seventeenth year, notwithstanding ill health and other afflictions, this lady has been pouring out volume after volume of beautiful and impressive poetry, under the titles of an *Essay on Mind*, *The Seraphim*, *The Romaunt of the Page*, *Casa Guidi Windows*, *Aurora Leigh*, &c. Many of her latter years have been spent in Italy. In her style, she shows an affinity to Shelley and Tennyson, but with a force and originality that bring her to the level of these bards. A keen sympathy with all who are believed to be oppressed—whether nations, or classes, or individuals—is one of the strongest features of Mrs Browning's muse. She thus puts the case of factory children :

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
Ere the sorrow comes with years ?  
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,  
And *that* cannot stop their tears.  
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows ;  
The young birds are chirping in the nest ;  
The young fawns are playing with the shadows ;  
The young flowers are blowing toward the west ;  
But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
They are weeping bitterly !  
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,  
In the country of the free.

For oh, say the children, we are weary,  
And we cannot run or leap ;  
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely  
To drop down in them and asleep.  
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—  
We fall upon our faces trying to go ;  
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,  
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.  
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,  
Through the coal-dark, underground—  
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron  
In the factories, round and round.  
For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning—  
Their wind comes in our faces—  
Till our hearts turn—our heads, with pulses burning,  
And the walls turn in their places—  
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—  
Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall—  
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—  
All are turning, all the day, and we with all !  
And, all day, the iron wheels are droning ;  
And sometimes we could pray,  
'O ye wheels'—breaking out in a mad moaning—  
'Stop ! be silent for to-day !'

Ay ! be silent ! let them hear each other breathing  
For a moment, mouth to mouth—  
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing  
Of their tender human youth !  
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion  
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals—  
Let them prove their inward souls against the notion  
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels !



Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,  
As if Fate in each were stark ;  
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,  
Spin on blindly in the dark.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM (1785-1842) was the author of various poetical volumes, as well as of several novels and biographies ; but his reputation must rest on a group of imitations of old ballads and songs, which he produced in early life, ere he had yet emerged from the ranks of the Scottish peasantry. Another bard of this grade, but of less happy history, is JOHN CLARE, a native of Northamptonshire. His poetry displays a minute acquaintance with external nature, and an earnest love of it, joined to much amiable feeling. After enjoying, from the success of his poems, a brief period of prosperity, Clare fell into misfortunes, which had the effect of depriving him of reason. More recently, Scotland produced a genuine poet in ROBERT NICOLL, whose span of life, however, was limited to twenty-four years. The poems and songs of Nicoll, some of which are in his vernacular tongue, have given him the name of *Scotland's Second Burns*. They display much of the passionate energy, and a large share of the philanthropy, which characterise the works of the Ayrshire bard. Another modern Scottish poet of genuine merit was WILLIAM MOTHERWELL (1797-1835). His ballads of *Jeanie Morison* and *Wearie's Well* are replete with a tragic melancholy that stands quite alone in Scottish verse. Circumstances are not favourable to the cultivation of any provincial language ; nevertheless, the pretensions of the Scottish Muse continue to be ably upheld by JAMES BALLANTINE, many of whose songs—for example, one embodying the poetical proverb, *Ilka blade o' grass keeps its ain drap o' dew*—exhibit a sweetness and tenderness marking the true poet.

The publication of the *Rejected Addresses* in 1813 obtained a brilliant reputation as a comic poet for JAMES SMITH (1775-1839), the brother of Horace

Smith the novelist. The volume consisted of imitations of the chief poets of the day ; but, unlike the generality of burlesque poems, those of Smith may be read over and over again for their own merits. The sale of twenty editions of such light familiar poems, while many volumes of esteemed verse rest with one, shows in a striking manner how much more acceptable is that which makes us smile, than even the profoundest exhibitions of sentiment. THOMAS HOOD (1798-1845) attained a high reputation on account of his many comic effusions, in which punning was practised with an accompanying humour that for once made it respectable in literature. In some of his productions, such as *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, *The Dream of Eugene Aram*, *The Haunted House*, and above all, *The Song of the Shirt*, he displayed other qualities—imagination and feeling—which were fast raising his name into a higher kind of distinction, when he was cut off by a lingering illness in the prime of life. The Rev. WILLIAM BARHAM, author of *Ingoldsby Legends*, may be ranked with this class of modern poets: since Hudibras, the English language has never been so dexterously or so comically handled.

The highest place among our living bards is, since the death of Wordsworth, accorded to ALFRED TENNYSON, now poet-laureate. His reputation rests on a group of miscellaneous pieces first issued in 1830, and afterwards, with additions, in 1842, and on several larger poems since published, *The Princess*, *In Memoriam*, *Maud*, and the *Idylls of the King*. They have fixed the attention of a large proportion of the young and thoughtful minds of our time. Mr Tennyson's muse is contemplative, retrospective, earnest, and replete with an elegant melancholy. There is often an exquisite simplicity in his thoughts. It may at the same time be remarked that no poet has, within so small a compass, exhibited such a wide range of styles and subjects. In his pages, says one of his critics,

'legendary history, fairy fiction, Greek poetry, and trees endowed with human speech, blend in the procession with Egyptian fanatics, rapt nuns, English ladies, peasant girls, artists, lawyers, farmers—in fact, a tolerably complete representation of the miscellaneous public of the present day; while the forms vary from epic fragments to the homeliest dialogues—from the simplest utterance of emotion in a song, to the highest allegory of a terrible and profound law of life.'

## FROM THE LOTOS-EATERS.

[The *Lotos* is an Eastern plant, eaten for the sake of the luxurious sleepiness which it produces.]

Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?  
All things have rest, and ripen towards the grave;  
In silence ripen, fall, and cease;  
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half dream!  
To hear each other's whispered speech;  
Eating the *lotos*, day by day;  
To watch the crisp'd ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;  
To muse and brood, and live again in memory  
With those old faces of our infancy,  
Heaped over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust shut in an urn of brass.

Lord MACAULAY (1800–1859), while chiefly esteemed as a historian, has also a high reputation as a poet. His juvenile ballad of *Iery, a Song of the Huguenots*, embodying the triumph of Henry IV. over the army

of the League, is certainly one of the most thrilling compositions of its class. When advanced into middle life, he presented his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, which established his poetical reputation. They are an attempt, by the aid of learning, to reproduce the chants, analogous to our modern ballads, on which it is now supposed that the earlier portion of Roman history is founded. They give us, in vivid and energetic verse, four of the heroic stories which may be supposed to have been favourites with the Roman populace and tribunes. This volume has experienced an extraordinary degree of popularity.

A similar ballad strain, tinged with an opposite political feeling, has been assumed by the Hon. Mr SMYTHE and Professor AYTOUN of Edinburgh. The *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers* (1849), by Mr Aytoun, form a really remarkable volume, their fervid eloquence having caused the Scottish public to glow over the glories of Montrose and Dundee, to all appearance as cordially as they have ever done over the sufferings of more favourite martyrs. Mr Aytoun, in his *Boswell* (1856), has produced an elaborate, but less successful poem on a well-known Scottish historical subject. His genius is as well calculated to shine in the heroi-comic as in the tragic vein. The *Bon Gaultier Ballads*, written by him in conjunction with his early friend Theodore Martin, are amongst the most successful efforts of the mocking muse in our time.

America has, during this age, produced many poets worthy to be ranked amongst their English brethren. WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT and FITZGREENE HALLECK are the most notable of those who adorned the first third of the nineteenth century. After them, in point of time, come H. W. LONGFELLOW, N. P. WILLIS, R. H. DANA, EDGAR ALLAN POE, and O. W. HOLMES. The works of Mr Longfellow have not merely impressed the British as well as the American public, but they may be said to have for the last twenty years been

scarcely rivalled in popularity in England by any native poems whatever. His diction is clear, simple, and elegant, and his vein of thought full of a pensive tenderness and beauty.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT (1781-1849), of Sheffield, only became known as a poet when passing into the wane of life. He abounded in vehement feeling, which he displayed chiefly on political topics, and particularly against the laws for trammelling trade in corn. Hence he has been styled the *Corn-law Rhymers*. Sir JOHN BOWRING, in his capacity as a poet, is chiefly recognised by his many happy translations from the Dutch, Russian, and other languages little cultivated in England. In CHARLES MACKAY, author of *The Salamandrine, and other Poems*, we discover a tone which reminds us of the manner of Goldsmith. He has, however, in his *Voices from the Crowd*, shown a flow of energetic feeling entirely his own. The *Festus* of PHILIP JAMES BAILEY, followed as it has been by other poems, has created for its author a fame of a very peculiar kind. His aim has been to describe the history of a divinely instructed mind or soul, soaring upwards to communion with the 'universal life' or 'fontal deity.' To follow a poet into regions so spiritual is possible to but a few. In 1853, the public was startled by the publication of a volume of *Poems*, marked by a redundancy of imagery and a fervour of feeling singular even in our age. The author, ALEXANDER SMITH, proved to be a young man of estimable character, occupying a humble situation in Glasgow. He was very soon transferred, by the generous patronage of the town council of Edinburgh, to a more congenial position, that of secretary to the University of Edinburgh. In 1857, he came forward with another volume, entitled *City Poems*, manifesting the same opulence of fancy as the first. Many other poets adorn an age usually said to be not very favourable to the cultivation of this department of literature. Amongst these may

be enumerated DAVID MOIR, Mr MONCKTON MILNES, CAMILLA TOULMIN, BESSIE RAYNER PARKES, ISA CRAIG, ELIZA COOK, FRANCES BROWNE, and Lady EMMELINE STUART WORTLEY, as those who appear to enjoy the most vital reputation.

#### DRAMATISTS.

During the course of the age now under our notice, dramatic literature has undergone a change corresponding with that which has taken place in all other departments of the belles-lettres. The taste for regular tragedies and comedies has declined with the taste for Pope and Richardson; and in their place have come plays of a less formal kind, displaying the pathos and humour of human life in that mixed state in which they are found in reality, and generally with much liveliness and rapidity of action. A new species of dramatic representation has also come into vogue—namely, the *Melodrama*; which, being a delineation of some romantic incident, aided by great splendour of scenery, dress, and decoration, may be said to correspond with the department of fictitious literature which, originating with Walpole, has been brought to perfection by Mrs Radcliffe, Sir Walter Scott, and others. It is the common opinion that the literature of the drama has declined in our times; and no one can deny that there are not now engaged in it the same superior intellects which gave it such lustre in the days of Elizabeth, or even in those of Queen Anne. For this, however, the chief reason is perhaps one of an accidental nature. Successful writing for the stage seems to require a close connection with the theatre itself, in order that the author may be able to adapt the language, characters, and general structure of the piece, to those circumstances, known only to actors, which tend to make dramatic representation effectual. Hence it is found that the

greatest dramatists of former times were either themselves players, or maintained a close acquaintance with the theatre. A wide space, however, has been drawn between the literary men of the present day and the actors. Our greatest poets, disdaining to subject their genius to a schooling from the performers, or to bend to considerations of theatrical convenience, have either abstained from dramatic composition, or written only what they term dramatic poems; that is, poems in a dramatic form, but not designed for representation. In the defect of better writers, there has arisen a class, consisting partly of actors and managers, who, without the genius of the kindred class of men who flourished in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., display the same readiness and skill, and in some instances no inconsiderable share of ability, in serving the theatres with pieces calculated to affect or entertain common audiences.

In the department of tragedy, so far as tragedy can be said to have had a distinct existence, we find little produced in this age besides the dramatic poems to which allusion has been made, or, at the best, tragedies intended, but not in the least fitted, for representation. In 1798, Miss JOANNA BAILLIE (1764-1851) published the first volume of a series of what she designated *Plays on the Passions*, of which other two volumes subsequently appeared. These are partly tragedies and partly comedies, one of each class being devoted to the development of a particular ruling passion, such as love, ambition, hope, and revenge. A volume of miscellaneous plays proceeded from the same pen in 1804; and *The Family Legend*, a tragedy, produced in 1810, closes the list of the dramatic works of this distinguished lady. According to a modern critic, there is in all these compositions great vigour, great variety of situation and character, a vehement and nervous eloquence, and a perpetual flow of exalted thought and feeling. The defects which disqualified them for the stage are

deficiencies of interest, of situation, of the rapidity and fullness of action, by which the attention of a theatrical audience can alone be sustained.

The tragedy of *Remorse*, by COLERIDGE; the tragic plays of *Halidon Hill* and *Auchindrane*, by Sir WALTER SCOTT; the *Manfred*, *Werner*, *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, and *Two Foscari*, of BYRON; the *Mirandola* of PROCTER, are also to be classed as dramatic poems, partaking of the ordinary character of the poetical productions of their respective authors, but possessing perhaps less of their usual vigour. *Bertram*, a tragedy by the Rev. ROBERT MATURIN, better known as a novelist, has appeared on the stage, for which, however, the wild passions delineated, and the odious nature of the subject, render it scarcely fit. *Evadne* and *The Apostate*, by Mr RICHARD LALOR SHEIL; *Fazio*, by the Rev. HENRY MILMAN; *Ion*, by Mr TALFOURD; *The Patrician's Daughter*, by Mr MAESTON; and *Julian*, *Rienzi*, and *The Vespers of Palermo*, by Miss MARY RUSSELL MITTFORD, are modern plays, respectable as dramatic poems, which have experienced some share of success upon the stage. On the other hand, *The Lady of Lyons*, by Sir LYTTON BULWER, while not meeting the requirements of the moralising reader, is successful as an acting play. The only author of recent times who has realised our ideas of the great dramatists of a former age, is Mr JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES, who, like Maturin and Sheil, is a native of Ireland, and is perhaps indebted for a part of his success to his professional connection with the stage. The principal plays of this writer are, *Caius Gracchus*, *Virginius*, *William Tell*, *The Wife*, and *The Hunchback*. His style, though modelled upon that of Massinger, is characterised by a simple energy and ardour peculiar to himself, but which sometimes betrays him into bald and homely expressions.

The genteel comedy of the eighteenth century may be said to have terminated with the productions of



RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN (1751-1816), a lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, and eminent as an orator in the House of Commons. In polish of composition, and vivacity of dialogue, nothing can exceed the *Rivals*, *Duenna*, and *School for Scandal* of this celebrated dramatist; though few of the characters display individuality, and the morality of the plot is often defective.

Of the writers who have been described as chiefly supplying the new pieces required at the theatres, one of the first in point of time was JOHN O'KEEFE (1746-1833), a native of Ireland, and who for a long time was a strolling actor in that country. From about the year 1779 to a late period of his life, O'Keefe was constantly employed in writing plays, of which above fifty were brought out at the London theatres, being generally light humorous pieces, designed only to make people merry, but sometimes containing a dash of original character. The most popular are *The Agreeable Surprise*, *Wild Oats*, *Modern Antiques*, *The Highland Reel*, and *The Poor Soldier*. CHARLES DIBDIN (1748-1815) wrote many dramatic pieces for temporary amusement, but is now remembered only for the great variety of national and nautical songs which he composed in the course of his own endeavours to entertain the public, as a reciter and singer. During the war occasioned by the French Revolution, the songs of Dibdin, of which the music was generally his own, had so powerful an effect in animating the lower departments of the naval service, that the author was thought worthy of a pension of two hundred pounds a year: those of a pathetic and affectionate kind may be described as models in that species of composition. Mr GEORGE COLMAN, son of the eminent dramatist of the same name, formerly mentioned, was the author of *The Mountaineers*, *The Poor Gentleman*, *John Bull*, *The Heir-at-Law*, and other popular plays; the distinguishing merit of which lies in a mixture of characters of tenderness and pathos, with the usual persons of the comic drama. *The Dramatist*, *The Will*,

and *Laugh when you Can*, are the best of the numerous productions of FREDERICK REYNOLDS, who for forty years served Covent Garden Theatre in the capacity of what he called 'thinker;' that is, performer of every kind of literary labour required in the establishment. Another diligent labourer for the theatres was THOMAS HOLCROFT, of whose numerous plays *The Road to Ruin* still maintains a deserved place on the stage. *The Honeymoon*, by JOHN TOBIN, and *Speed the Plough* and *The School of Reform*, by THOMAS MORTON, were the most distinguished dramatic productions of the earlier years of the present century; and of the more recent writers of this class, Messrs POOLE, PLANCHE, JERROLD, BLANCHARD, BOURICAULT, BUCKSTONE, TOM TAYLOR, SHIRLEY BROOKS, and STIRLING COYNE, may be mentioned as the most eminent.

## NOVELISTS AND ROMANCERS.

The English novel, which took its rise from Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne, in the reign of George II., was not cultivated with great success during the earlier years of his successor. The works of this kind which appeared between 1760 and 1790 are generally poor imitations of the various styles of the eminent writers just named, and claim no notice in the present work. Among the few exceptions, the most conspicuous are the *Evelina* (1777) and *Cecilia* (1782) of Miss Frances Burney, afterwards Madame D'ARBLAY, who subsequently wrote *Camilla* and *The Wanderer of Norway*, besides a memoir of her father, the author of the History of Music. The first of these novels was composed by stealth, it is said, at the age of seventeen, and only acknowledged by the author to her parents, when they, in common with the public, had discovered its extraordinary merits. So high a reputation did Madame D'Arblay obtain by her prose fictions, that for

one of the last she received three thousand pounds. Their most prominent merit lies in the lively and just pictures of character with which they are filled. Another but less important exception may be instanced in *The Recess* (1783), by Miss SOPHIA LEE, a tale of the time of Elizabeth, in which there is much romantic interest. In 1784, appeared the impressive eastern tale of *Vathek*, the composition of WILLIAM BECKFORD, afterwards of Fonthill, a man of vast fortune, which he spent chiefly in magnificent works of art. The final scene of this story is sublime and affecting in an extraordinary degree. Mr Beckford was also the author of several works descriptive of European countries. Mrs CHARLOTTE SMITH (1749-1806), a gentlewoman who was forced by severe misfortunes to resort to her pen for subsistence, may be said to have revived the novel of modern times, after it had for some time been dormant. Her *Emmeline*, *Celestina*, and *Old English Manor-house*, not to speak of other works of scarcely inferior merit, made that impression upon the public which is usually produced by something different from, or superior to, what has previously been familiar: they were tales of passion, related in an interesting manner, with a happy mixture of pathos and humour, and a lively and varied exhibition of natural character.

In 1789, Dr JOHN MOORE, a native of Scotland, published the first of a series of novels by which he acquired celebrity. *Zeluco* displays a knowledge of human nature, and a force of moral painting, which entitle the author to a respectable place among the British novelists. It was followed by *Edward* (1796) and *Mordaunt* (1800), which, though betraying a gradual decline of power in the writer, are works of no inconsiderable merit. *The Simple Story* (1791), and *Nature and Art* (1796), by Mrs INCHBALD, an actress and dramatic writer, are novels of this period which have likewise obtained an established reputation. The authoress has not distinguished herself more honourably

by her talents than by some circumstances in her private life. In a profession which, more than most others, exposes its votaries to extravagance, to vice, and to poverty, she lived with the simplicity and purity of an anchorite, and thus was able to succour many distressed friends, and to realise an independency for herself. She was the editor of a large collection of plays, to which she contributed critical remarks of much judgment.

About the time when Mrs Smith was reviving the novel, that species of fiction called the *romance*, which has been already described as taking its rise with Mr Walpole and Mrs Reeve, and as being devoted to the description of scenery and character of the middle or Gothic ages, was improved by the genius of Mrs ANN RADCLIFFE (1764–1823), the wife of a gentleman who conducted a newspaper in London. Her first work, *The Castles of Athlyn and Dunbayne*, produced in her twenty-fifth year, gave little promise of excellence; but she soon after issued, in rapid succession, *The Sicilian Romance*, *The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Italian* (the last in 1797), all of which powerfully arrested public attention. Mrs Radcliffe may be said to have been the first to take full advantage, for a literary purpose, of fear and mystery, whether depending on natural circumstances, or on the superstition of the reader. She lays the scene of her stories in some place with which her readers associate ideas of awe and romantic terror—the recesses of an unfrequented forest in France, the dungeons of a Sicilian castle, or the dark and long-drawn aisles of an Italian monastery. These scenes she peoples with characters, not marked particularly by any individual features, but belonging to certain classes—a tyrannical and guilt-laden count, an aged and garrulous housekeeper, a gentle and gallant hero, a soft and sentimental heroine, a pert but superstitious waiting-maid, a subordinate villain either from the cloister or the guard-room, and a variety of other persons who act either for good or ill, and help to

develop the plot. Sights and noises, apparently supernatural, occur throughout her tales, and awaken a sense of wonder mixed with fear, which keeps the interest of the reader alive to the conclusion, when they are generally explained as having been caused by natural circumstances. The effect likely to be produced by such compositions upon the minds of at least young readers may be somewhat questionable; but it is not to be disputed that they manifest high powers of fancy and description on the part of the author, and are calculated to afford a delight of no ordinary kind to those who are disposed to indulge in the pleasures of the imagination.

The French Revolution, which was contemporary with the first efforts of Smith, Moore, Inchbald, and Radcliffe, was the immediate cause of directing into this department of literature the infinitely more powerful and original mind of WILLIAM GODWIN (1756-1836), originally a dissenting clergyman, but who for some years had cultivated letters as a profession. He produced, in 1793, *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Justice*, in which, with much eloquence and ingenious argument, but under many mistaken impressions and views, he endeavoured to show the inadequacy of existing institutions to protect the rights of the citizen. In order to convey his meaning more intelligibly to the minds of the people, he published in the ensuing year his novel of *Caleb Williams*, which, by a series of fictitious incidents, exemplifies the main proposition of his political work, in the story of a youth, who, though perfectly innocent, is convicted, through the malignity of a really guilty person, of a capital crime. This fiction was read with eager interest, and praised even by those who disputed the conclusions aimed at by the writer. It was followed in 1799 by *St Leon*, which professes to be the autobiography of an individual possessed of inexhaustible wealth, incapable of mortality, and, from these very causes, the most miserable of beings. *Fleetwood* (1805), *Mandeville* (1818), and *Cloudesley* (1830), are

other novels of the same writer, but much inferior to his first two tales. Mr Godwin, who possessed learning equal to his genius, was the author of a *History of the English Commonwealth* and of two elaborate biographical works, *The Life and Age of Chaucer* (1803), and *The Lives of Edward and John Philips, Nephews and Pupils of Milton* (1815), besides a composition published in 1834 called *The Lives of the Necromancers*.

*The Canterbury Tales* (1797) of Misses HARRIET and SOPHIA LEE, and *Octavia* (1798), by Miss ANNA MARIA PORTER, are the only other performances of merit which appeared before the close of the eighteenth century. *Krútsner*, one of the *Canterbury Tales*, by Miss Sophia Lee, is a story of deep and touching interest, and had the honour of being dramatised by Lord Byron. Miss Anna Porter afterwards produced many novels of merit, but she yields in genius to her sister, Miss JANE PORTER, whose *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and *Scotch Chiefs* (1810) are written in an elevated and impassioned strain.

*The Father and Daughter* (1801) was the first of the long series of fictions by which AMELIA OPIE acquired her reputation. Her principal works are *Simple Tales* (1806) and *Tales of Real Life* (1813), which, without much originality in incident or character, display a truth and delicacy of sentiment, a graceful simplicity of dialogue, and an art of engaging the sympathy and melting the heart of the reader, in which Mrs Opie had no superior.

Miss MARIA EDGEWORTH, of Edgeworthstown, in Ireland, began her literary career by the publication of *The Parents' Assistant*, a work conveying moral instruction to young people in a pleasing form. Her first novel, *Belinda*, which appeared in 1801, was designed to expose the heartlessness and misery which prevail in certain departments of refined society. *Castle Rackrent* (a sketch of a series of Irish landlords), *Moral Tales*, *Popular Tales*, *Tales of Fashionable Life*, *Patronage*, and

other works, followed in rapid succession, and established the reputation of the authoress. Miss Edgeworth may be described as a moralist, taking advantage of fiction as a means of conveying and impressing her lessons. 'Her works,' says an eminent critic, 'are not happy effusions of fancy, or casual inspirations of genius, but the mature and seasonable fruits of powerful sense and nice moral perception, joined to a rare and invaluable talent for the observation and display of human character. It is impossible to read ten pages of her writings without feeling that every part of them was intended to do good—not only to correct fatal errors of opinion, to soften dispositions, and remove prejudices unfriendly to happiness, but to display wisdom and goodness at once in their most familiar and engaging aspects.'\* Another critic equally eminent, after taking some pains to show that the great end of fiction is simply to gratify the imagination, alleges that the moral aims of these otherwise excellent compositions are brought so officiously and prominently forward as to become disagreeable. 'Miss Edgeworth's novels,' says this writer, 'put us in mind of those clocks and watches which are condemned a double or a treble debt to pay; which, besides their legitimate object to show the hour, tell you the day of the month or the week, give you a landscape for a dial-plate, with the second hand forming the sails of a windmill, or have a barrel to play a tune, or an alarum to remind you of an engagement—all very good things in their way; but so it is, that these watches never tell you the time so well as those in which that has been the exclusive object of the maker.'† With these merits and these faults, if faults they really be, Miss Edgeworth must be allowed to have afforded as much entertainment, united to as much instruction, as any modern writer. There is hardly any good

\* Edinburgh Review, XXVIII. 390.

† Quarterly Review, XXIV. 358.

quality which she has not recommended by some pleasing example, or any vice or folly of which she has not illustrated the unhappy consequences.

The earlier years of the present century produced, in Miss JANE AUSTEN, a novelist combining great skill in the construction of a natural series of events, and the delineation of natural characters, with moral aims less prominent, but perhaps more effectual than those of Miss Edgeworth, and with that nice delicacy of feeling which female writers alone seem able to give to their compositions. Her *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Emma*, are novels which, for these reasons, may be placed in the hands of any reader. *Self-control* and *Discipline*, by Mrs BRUNTON of Edinburgh, are sound moral lessons happily conveyed through the medium of fiction. *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808), by Mrs ELIZABETH HAMILTON, has the merit of being the first of those just and lively pictures of Scottish humble life which have assumed so prominent a place in modern literature. In 1809, Mrs HANNAH MORE, who had distinguished herself by many writings in prose and verse of a religious and moral kind, published *Cælebs in Search of a Wife*, in which she endeavoured to exhibit the dispositions, manners, attainments, and principles necessary to insure domestic happiness. The merit of this composition, and its novelty as a combination of religion with the usual qualities of a work of fiction, attracted much notice. Mrs More died in 1833, after a life of eighty-eight years, employed with more extensive benefit to her species than that of perhaps any preceding miscellaneous writer.

The novels of Opie, Edgeworth, Austen, Brunton, Hamilton, and More, form a remarkable class of compositions, both as the production of a set of female writers, who for a time seemed to monopolise this department of literature, and on account of the refined and amiable morality by which they are in general characterised. By the exertions of these ladies, the



novel was in a great measure redeemed from its ancient popular character, of a narrative calculated rather to bewilder and mislead than to instruct or improve the minds of ordinary readers. The views of life, of characters, and of manners, imparted by these books, are almost without exception consistent with truth, and cannot be perused without profit as well as amusement. The novels alluded to have another merit, in as far as they served to render public taste intolerant of the works of inferior talent and questionable morality, which, down to that time, were constantly issuing from the press.

Among the numberless productions of the minor writers, no small portion were imitations of the romances of Mrs Radcliffe. Hundreds of volumes had appeared with romantic Italian titles, and filled with gloomy castles, cruel barons, and mysterious monks, but entirely destitute of those powers of description and imagination, and of that command over the wonder and fear of the reader, for which *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was so remarkable. The only individuals who showed any portion of the same genius were Mr MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS, whose tales, however, were disgraced by their licentiousness; Mr ROBERT MATURIN, already mentioned as a tragic dramatist, whose *Fatal Revenge* (1807), *Women* (1818), and *Melmoth* (1820), in defiance of irregularity of structure and many blemishes in point of taste, manifest strong powers of imagination and language; and Lady MORGAN, who, with still greater faults, cannot be denied the possession of much brilliancy of fancy, and sway over the feelings of her readers, though she unfortunately wants those noble presiding aims which have recommended the works of her female contemporaries.

Such were the individuals who had cultivated prose fiction, when, in 1814, public attention was arrested by the appearance of an anonymous novel, entitled *Waverley*, in which there was conveyed a striking delineation of

the transactions which rendered the year 1745 so memorable in Scotland, together with descriptions of real and fictitious characters, connected, or supposed to be connected, with those events, and sketches of contemporary manners and circumstances, which it was evident could have been produced by none but a master in fictitious literature, though it was difficult to say who that master was. The publication of the work in Edinburgh, and the skill which it displayed, in common with the poems of Mr Walter Scott, in awakening the associations which are entertained respecting the history of past times, and the recent traces of a ruder and more romantic state of society, led to a general surmise that that gentleman, having found his popularity as a poet on the decline, had sent forth this composition as an experiment in a different department of fiction. Without disclosing his secret, the author proceeded to take advantage of the favour which was bestowed upon his first attempt, and next year published *Guy Mannering*, a tale unconnected with history, but displaying the same skill in depicting Scottish character and manners, and the same art in engaging the sympathy of the reader. To this succeeded, in rapid succession, *The Antiquary* and *Rob Roy*, *Tales of My Landlord* (three series), *The Monastery*, and *The Abbot*; all of which were designed to illustrate the state of society in Scotland at various important periods of her annals. The graphic force with which he brought both historical and imaginary beings before the mind of the reader; the singular interest which he gave to the proceedings and relations of these persons; the humour, the pathos, the fine spirit of benevolence which pervaded every page, had, long ere the last of these works was published, raised their unknown author to a reputation not only exceeding that of Fielding, Smollett, and all the great masters of prose fiction, but equalling the reverence which ages had accumulated for the first names in English literature. In 1820, having in some measure exhausted

Scottish history and manners, he commenced, in *Ivanhoe*, a series of romances upon the various more interesting parts of English history, in which he met with all but equal success. To this class belong *Kenilworth* (1821), *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822), *Peveril of the Peak* (1823), and *Woodstock* (1826). *The Pirate* (1822), *St Ronan's Well* and *Redgauntlet* (1824), *The Chronicles of the Canongate* (1827-8), and *Castle Dangerous* (1831), are tales of Scottish life; while *Quentin Durward* (1823), *Tales of the Crusaders* (1825), *Anne of Geierstein* (1828), and *Count Robert of Paris* (1831), relate to foreign scenes and history. Of this last class it may be said, that while they do not equal the other productions of the same author, they display more or less of his best qualities, and infinitely transcend the works of all other novelists. It was not till 1827, that Mr SCOTT, who had in the meantime been created a baronet, as a mark of honour for his eminent abilities, acknowledged himself to be the author of these admired fictions.

When we consider Sir Walter Scott as a delineator of human character, we are struck by the fertility of his invention, and by the force, novelty, and fidelity of his pictures. Like Shakspeare, he brings to our minds, not abstract beings, or impersonations of certain passions and affections, but breathing, acting, speaking individuals. Dress, manner, features, and bearing, are set so vividly before us, that the mental illusion is rendered as complete as words can make it. In the description of external objects, and particularly of natural scenery, Sir Walter Scott is successful beyond all writers subsequent to Milton. Avoiding cumbersome and confusing detail, he touches rapidly those points which would first strike the eye of a beholder, and thus invariably conveys a vivid and intelligible picture. But, excellent as are his descriptions of quiescent objects, it is in his treatment of events—of the visible operation of men and of the elements—that he displays most power. He knows the effect producible by leaving circumstances in the

incompleteness and obscurity in which they often present themselves to the senses of a single person : he tells just what that person could have perceived, and leaves the sketch to be finished by his reader. His plots want the completeness and perfect development for which those of Fielding are remarkable : he generally gives too much detail at the commencement, and winds up the conclusion too abruptly ; yet the story is always such as to excite and maintain attention. Though he has not, like Miss Edgeworth, aimed at inculcating particular lessons for the conduct of life, his writings are all favourable to morality. They inspire generous emotions, and warm and benevolent feelings towards our fellow-creatures ; and never tend to diminish our confidence in virtue, or our abhorrence of vice. He has been observed to resemble Homer and Shakspeare in the dismissal of all considerations of himself from his writings. Of his own opinions, habits, and personal peculiarities, we discover scarcely any trace, except when he occasionally gives a glimpse of that kindness with which he regarded all mankind, and that rectitude of moral principle which rendered him as virtuous as he was great.

The Waverley Novels, as the entire works of this author have been designated, had the effect of still farther elevating the reputation of that department of fiction, and of inducing many authors of distinguished ability to cultivate it. In *The Annals of the Parish* (1819), *The Ayrshire Legatees* (1820), *The Entail* (1823), and other works, by Mr JOHN GALT, the author of Waverley was rivalled in the humorous and less dignified portions of his writings, by representations of the character and manners of the middle and lower orders of Scotland, intermingled with traits of sly and sarcastic sagacity, occasionally softened and relieved by touches of unexpected tenderness and simple pathos, but more or less tinged by provincial peculiarities, which detracted in some measure from their general

effect. The tales entitled *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life*, and *The Trials of Margaret Lyndsay*, by Professor WILSON, aim, on the other hand, at delineating the milder traits of the national character, generally under a state of suffering. The *Winter Evening Tales* and *Shepherd's Calendar* of JAMES HOGG, present the characters and incidents of rustic, and especially pastoral Scottish life, with a degree of force and fidelity only too great, in as far as it is attended by a deficiency of taste. *Olen-Albyn* (1815), a tale by Mrs JOHNSTONE, written, though not published before the appearance of *Waverley*, approaches that novel in the romantic glow which it casts over Highland character and scenery; and *Elisabeth de Bruce* (1827), by the same writer, contains some happy sketches of familiar Scottish life. A respectable degree of success in delineating the homely manners of the middle and lower orders in Scotland, has been attained by Mr ANDREW PICKEN, in his *Tales of the West of Scotland*, and *Dominic's Legacy*; and by Captain THOMAS HAMILTON in his *Cyril Thornton*, and other works. There is, however, no writer of the *Waverley* school who approaches Miss FERRIER, author of *Marriage*, *The Inheritance*, and *Destiny*. The writings of this lady abound in characters of a humorous class, which seem as if they had been directly painted from living originals.

Those works of Sir Walter Scott which turn upon conspicuous points in Scottish history, and reproduce, with the free painting of fiction, the characters appropriate to the events, have been imitated less successfully in the *Ringan Gilhaiss* of Galt and similar productions. The profound historical learning of the author of *Waverley*, and the dignity of his mind, seem to have given him an advantage in this species of composition, much more remarkable than any which he derived from his acquaintance with contemporary manners.

His English historical romances have been copied

more happily in *Brambletye House*, *The Tor Hill*, and other novels, by Mr HORACE SMITH ; while his foreign historical tales are rivalled in *Darnley*, *Richelieu*, *Mary of Burgundy*, and other works, by Mr JAMES. These gentlemen bring to their tasks an extensive and accurate knowledge of the history and manners of the time which they have in view ; and if they had possessed the masterly ease under which Scott concealed his art, their productions might be placed at no great distance behind *Kenilworth* and *Quentin Durward*.

The interest which Scott and Galt had given to Scottish manners, very naturally suggested similar representations of the national peculiarities of Ireland. This was a task which could hardly be said to have been executed in the sober narratives of Miss Edgeworth, which do not introduce the broader traits of Irish character. It had been attempted in some of the novels of Lady Morgan, but rather in the manner of a political censor, than of a cool delineator of the workings of the human heart. It was reserved for the late JOHN BANIM, in his *Tales of the O'Hara Family*, *The Croppy*, and *The Denounced*, to give the first portraits of Irish life, in that style of freedom, breadth, and minuteness, for which a taste had been created by the author of *Waverley*. Mr Banim is liable to the charge of occasional exaggeration and extravagance ; and the scenes selected by him for description are often so violent and horrible, that, however true to nature, it were to be wished that they had been either softened or omitted. Yet he possesses a rough masculine vigour, a talent for the development of a mysterious tale, and an acquaintance with Irish character, which place him very high in the list of fictitious authors. Another almost equally successful writer of the same school was GERALD GRIFFIN (1803–1840), author of *Tales of the Munster Festivals*, *The Collegians*, and other works. This amiable young writer devoted himself in his ..... a member

of the Christian Brotherhood, a Catholic body resident at Cork, who make it their duty to instruct the poor. In Mrs S. C. HALL's *Irish Stories*, in Mr CARLETON's *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, and in the works of several anonymous writers, great skill has been shown in depicting the dark and the bright, the pathetic and the comic, of Irish life; while Mr CROFTON CROKER has displayed much ease, playfulness, and humour, in his *Fairy Legends of the South of Ireland*.

By the individuals who have thus been enumerated, novels were written in illustration of Scottish, English, and Irish life, and of some parts of the history of the continental states. It remains to be mentioned that, in *Anastasius*, by Mr THOMAS HOPE; in *Hajji Baba*, by Mr JAMES MORIER; and in the *Kuzzilbash*, and other tales, by Mr JAMES FRASER, equal skill and talent have been displayed in the delineation of Oriental manners. The first, which refers to the Turks, depicts the wilder and more selfish passions in a manner which we feel to be fascinating, even while it is painful. *Hajji Baba*, with less power as a work of fiction, has all the value of an exact description of Persian manners; while the *Kuzzilbash*, inferior in sentiment and poetic conception to *Anastasius*, and decidedly below *Hajji Baba* in verisimilitude, surpasses both in an intimate acquaintance with Oriental character. In *Salathiel*, by the Rev. Mr CROLY, an attempt was made, with considerable success, to found a historical romance on the ancient manners of Judea and the story of the Wandering Jew.

The works of Mr WASHINGTON IRVING (1783-1859), though none of them are novels in the usual sense of the word, seem to fall under this department of literature more properly than under any other. Being a native of the United States of America, Mr Irving commenced his literary career in New York, by the publication of a small periodical entitled *Salmagundi*, in which he burlesqued the manners of various classes of his fellow-citizens. His next production, a *History of New*

York, gave a fictitious and traditionary account of the original Dutch inhabitants of that city, and evinced that the author was endowed with a rich fund of humour. His genius reached its maturity in *The Sketch-book* (1820), which, being published in England, was the means of introducing him to the British nation. This composition consists of a series of papers, of which some are tales, while others are descriptions of scenery and manners in England, and a few are devoted to moral and political speculation. The novelty, both of the matter and manner of this work, obtained for it a great and sudden popularity. The papers referring to Dutch-American traditions were peculiarly relished, on account of the new and grotesque images which they brought before the mind; and even in the delineations of scenery, character, and circumstances, with which we were familiar, it was found that the American had beheld them with a veneration, and written of them with a pathos, which few Britons have attained. The sentimental sketches of Irving are characterised by a delicacy and tenderness which remind his readers of Mackenzie, while his comic pieces exhibit a quiet and sagacious humour resembling that of Goldsmith. His style is remarkable for a studied melody and polish, which has become very uncommon in the present age. Encouraged by the success of the *Sketch-book*, Mr Irving published *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), an extension of that department of his former work which referred to old English manners; *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), a series of comic, pathetic, and superstitious narratives; and *The Alhambra* (1832), which may be described as a 'Sketch-book' of the ancient Moorish kingdom of Granada. This elegant author has also published an elaborate *Life of Columbus*, and a work, partly fictitious and partly historical, under the title of *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*.

The presiding aim of the novelist is to introduce his readers to circumstances which excite interest, either



by their intrinsic nature or by their combination and arrangement. And to produce this excitement, it seems to be requisite that these circumstances should be different from those which the reader is accustomed to contemplate. Thus, the stories which Sir Walter Scott has narrated of Highland robbers and the heroes of the civil war, derive their charm, in a great measure, from their being read in the quiet and security of a civilised age. Hence it is that a young lady, happy within the walls of a boarding-school, delights to follow a fictitious heroine through every kind of danger and distress. The highly-educated gentleman solaces himself with tales exhibiting the various passions of the savage breast; and the wealthy citizen, who never feels the want of any comfort, and is scrupulous to give no alms for which he is not rated, glows over pictures of unmerited poverty and agonizing hardship. Even the poor, it would appear, have no sympathy with a literature referring to the poor: they wish, when they read, to be introduced to scenes which they will probably never see in reality, and to luxuries which they will never enjoy.

It seems to have been to this principle that the public was indebted for those *fashionable novels* which, for ten years subsequent to 1823, attracted so much attention. The series of tales entitled *Sayings and Doings*, commenced in that year by Mr THEODORE HOOK, and followed by *Gilbert Gurney*, and other works of the same author, may be said to stand at the head of this class of productions, which, being devoted to descriptions of life in the higher circles of society, possess all the value of books of information to such individuals in the middle ranks as are curious to study the manners of those whom they think more fortunate than themselves. Mr Hook was followed immediately by Mr LISTER and the Marquis of NORMANBY. Afterwards, Sir EDWARD LYTTON BULWER entered the same walk, but with powers of a higher cast. His *Pelham*, *The Disowned*,

*Paul Clifford*, &c., are works of remarkable talent, the result of a rich imagination, joined to no inconsiderable powers of reflection, although occasionally deformed by affectation, and sometimes faulty as to aim. Singular to tell, a second series of Sir Edward's works—the product of his middle age—bearing the titles of *The Cautions*, *My Novel*, and *What will he do with it?*—have exhibited a set of powers in a great measure new, and strikingly superior to those exhibited in his earlier works. In the numerous novels of Mrs GORE, we find much vivacity, though the manner is too unvaryingly satirical. *Tremaine* and other novels of Mr WARD are peculiar in their admitting copious dissertations under the form of conversation. Mr BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI has produced several tales of fascinating interest—*Vivian Grey*, *Contarini Fleming*, *Coningsby*, and *Tancred*. The two last are, however, deformed by traits of an imbibed spirit and perverted judgment on the part of the author. Lady CHARLOTTE BURY and Mrs TROLLOPE are other novelists of this school, whose writings have attracted a large share of attention.

To the same principle, of a love of scenes and ideas beyond the scope of our daily life, may be referred the popularity of various novels and tales, descriptive of the peril and enterprise of military and naval life, by Messrs SHERER, GLEIG, MARRYAT, GLASCOCK, and NEALE; and to it also may be ascribed the favourable reception of a series of novels by Mr COOPER, in which the circumstances of savage and half-civilised life in the wilder parts of America have been represented with great truth, clearness, and interest.

During the same period, there have been several successful novelists, not to be ranked under any of these schools. Mr JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART displayed masterly powers in his *Valerius*, *Reginald Dalton*, and *Matthew Wald*. The *Highways and Byways* of Mr THOMAS COLLEY GRATTAN form a pleasing series of tales; and in Mr S. WARREN'S *Diary of a Late*

*Physician*, and *Ten Thousand a Year*, we have domestic calamities, and the sufferings peculiar to our state of society, delineated with a powerful pencil. The tales of Miss MARTINEAU, particularly the series illustrative of the doctrines of political economy, display a vigorous imagination, accompanied by powers of reflection seldom found in the same mind. The novels of Mr LOVER and Mr LEVER, chiefly relating to Irish scenes and characters, have attained great popularity. Finally, we may here advert to Mrs CROWE's tales of *Susan Hopley*, *Lilly Dawson*, &c., as displaying a rich invention, and exercising a fascinating influence over the reader.

In a comparatively recent period have arisen two fictionists, whose names cannot be associated for any other reason than that they already stand pre-eminent over all their brethren. From his being first in the field, the first place may be assigned to CHARLES DICKENS. Reared in the metropolis, it was the fortune of this author to become familiar with its humble life to a degree seldom attained. Keen powers of minute observation, especially for the ludicrous; a fine strain of humane feeling, not always rightly directed, but essentially beautiful, joined to vivacious literary powers, have enabled Mr Dickens to convert the recollections of his life into an endless fund of entertainment for the public. To enumerate his *Pickwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Oliver Twist*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield*, *Little Dorrit*, *The Bleak House*, &c., is but to remind the public of so much rich fare on which it has banqueted for several years.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, after publishing various works in light literature under the assumed name of Michael Angelo Titmarsh, and contributing with success to various periodicals, established his fame as a novelist of modern life by his tale of *Vanity Fair* (1848). He has since then added to his celebrity by the novels of *Pendennis* and *Esmond*, and by a series of lectures which he has delivered on the *English Comic*

*Writers.* Mr Thackeray is not distinguished by his skill in the formation or conducting of a story, and his novels are usually of a fragmentary and imperfect nature. He captivates his readers by his keen sense of the follies, meannesses, and vanities of mankind, and by the bold and decided features which he confers upon his characters. He is the satirist of modern society, and is appreciated as such even in the circles amongst which his darts are thrown. At the same time, there is a fine humanity in this writer, which reconciles us to a pungent manner and a gallery of characters, many of whom are detestable from their worthlessness, while others are contemptible from their silly amiability.

Even since the forthcoming of Mr Thackeray, there has been a fresh burst of fiction, showing how inexhaustible is the treasury on which the tale-writer has to draw. The *Mary Barton*, &c., of Mrs GASKELL; the *Olive*, *John Halifax*, &c., of DINAH M. MULOCK; the *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* of CHARLOTTE BRONTË; the *Allon Locke* of the Rev. CHARLES KINGSLEY; the *Adam Bede* of a lady writing under the feigned name of GEORGE ELIOT; the *Woman in White* of WILKIE COLLINS; the *Silver Cord* of SHIRLEY BROOKS; the *Peg Woffington*, &c., of Mr CHARLES READE; and a series of tales by Mr HAWTHORNE, an American author, are all works of remarkable talent, and generally of a good tendency.

#### HISTORIANS.

In this department of composition, the present period can show few works equal in polish and brilliancy to some of those which were published a little earlier; but it is acknowledged to have produced a considerable number, which, with a respectable degree of elegance, exceed the former in depth and accuracy of research.

*The History of the Roman Republic*, published in 1784, by Dr ADAM FERGUSON, was a respectable

production, but is now in a great measure laid aside, in consequence of the new light which has been thrown upon the subject by the German historian Niebuhr. A comparatively summary work by Dr ARNOLD conveys to the reader the benefit of the recent inquiries. Of *The History of Greece*, published in 1786 by Dr JOHN GILLIES, in two volumes, it may in like manner be said, that though long highly esteemed, it has been superseded by superior works of more recent date. The first of these was an elaborate one by Mr MITFORD, generally considered as much vitiated by the aristocratic prejudices of the author, but presenting a full and clear view of the subject. A more liberal work has been completed by Dr THIRLWALL, Bishop of St Davids. Another by Mr GROTE, and doing for Greece what Niebuhr did for Rome, appears to have exhausted the subject, as far as is permitted by accessible knowledge. In 1789, JOHN PINKERTON (1758-1825) published *An Inquiry into the History of Scotland, preceding the Reign of Malcolm III.*, in which much light was thrown upon a very obscure portion of our annals. Pinkerton, possessing in perfection the enthusiasm and untiring industry of the historical antiquary, was also marked by the prejudices which are too often found in connection with that character; and, without the ability to write in an elegant and philosophical manner, rendered this defect only more conspicuous by his constant and unnecessary endeavours to attain those excellences. His *History of Scotland, from the Accession of the House of Stuart to the Reign of James V.*, published in 1797, in two volumes quarto, would be admired for its learning and research, if the author had not attempted to give to its comparatively humble and obscure details the swelling declamation with which Gibbon had recorded the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

By far the most eminent historical writer who appeared in the latter years of the eighteenth century, was WILLIAM ROSCOE (1752-1831), a man of obscure

birth and scanty education, and who was never in any situation more congenial to literary study than that of an attorney in the commercial town of Liverpool. By uncommon powers of application, great industry, and singular command over his own mind, Mr Roscoe qualified himself, in the midst of scenes and pursuits the most unfavourable, for undertaking a history of the *Life of Lorenzo de Medici*; a task requiring a profound acquaintance with Italian literature and the annals of the fine arts. This work appeared in 1795, in two volumes quarto, and at once elevated the author to a place amongst the classical writers of history. Having been recommended to continue this work so as to embrace the history of the revival of learning in Italy, Mr Roscoe published, in 1805, *The Life and Pontificate of Leo X.*, in four volumes. If he here failed to give so much pleasure to his readers, it may be at least allowed that the subject was more extensive and difficult. The chief fault of the work—induced, no doubt, by the nature of Mr Roscoe's profession—is a minuteness of narration, which makes no difference between the important and the trivial.

In 1799, Mr SHARON TURNER, a solicitor, commenced the publication of a series of works on English history, by which he obtained a highly-respectable reputation. The first was a *History of the Anglo-Saxons*; the second, a *History of England during the Middle Ages*. In subsequent publications, he continued the series to the end of the reign of Elizabeth; the whole being comprised in twelve volumes, and containing much new and interesting information on the government, laws, literature, and manners, as well as on the civil and ecclesiastical history of the country. Mr Turner also published a *Sacred History of the World*, in two volumes: this book is intended to afford to young persons a selected and concentrated view of the chief facts and reasonings on the creation, intellectual design, and divine economy of the world, conceived and expressed

in such a manner as to suit the modern style of thought and argument in which philosophical subjects are presented.

WILLIAM COXE (1748-1828), Archdeacon of Wilts, was the author of various historical works of a very elaborate character. His *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of Sir Robert Walpole*, published in 1798, in three quarto volumes, was the first tolerable account of any part of our history subsequent to the accession of the House of Hanover. It was followed by *Memoirs of Horatio Lord Walpole*, in which there was a view of the times between 1678 and 1757. These works derive a great value from the mass of original papers published in connection with them. His *History of the House of Austria* (1807), and his *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon* (1813), were almost the first English works in which an acquaintance was displayed with the materials of European history extant in other languages than the French and Latin. Archdeacon Coxe also published the *Life and Select Works of Benjamin Stillingfleet*, and the *Life and Papers of the Duke of Marlborough*.

Resembling Turner and Coxe in the vastness of his undertakings, but greatly their inferior as a writer, was GEORGE CHALMERS (1744-1825), a native of Scotland, and originally a barrister in one of the American colonies before their disjunction from Britain. His first composition, *A History of the United Colonies, from their Settlement till the Peace of 1763*, appeared in 1780, and from time to time he gave to the world many works connected with history, politics, and literature. In 1807, he commenced the publication of his *Caledonia*, of which three large volumes had appeared, when his death precluded the hope of its being completed. It contains a laborious though inelegant detail of the earlier periods of Scottish history, with minute topographical and historical accounts of the various provinces of the country. A *History of Scotland*, during the time

between the union of the crowns and the union of the kingdoms, was published in 1800, by Mr MALCOLM LAING, a Scottish advocate, and bears a high character for acumen and research. Mr PATRICK FRASER TYTLER, a gentleman of the same profession, has more recently undertaken and executed a complete *History of Scotland*, from the death of Alexander III. to the union of the crowns; and the subject has been treated in more than one form by Sir WALTER SCOTT. Of later successful writers on subjects connected with Scottish history, it may be sufficient to point to Mr COSMO INNES and Mr JOHN HILL BURTON, both of them advocates at the Scottish bar.

CHARLES JAMES FOX (1748-1806), so celebrated as a statesman, contemplated for many years before his death the composition of an elaborate work respecting the transactions which preceded, attended, and followed the Revolution of 1688. The only portion which he found leisure to write was published in 1808, under the title of *A History of the Early Part of the Reign of James II., with an Introductory Chapter*. Unsatisfactory as so small a fragment could not fail to be, it displayed such qualities as increased the public regret for its not having been completed. Without any effort at profound thinking or very elegant writing, it strongly exemplified the high principles and gentle and kind dispositions of the author. The task thus demitted by Mr Fox was afterwards undertaken by a distinguished ornament of the same political party, Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH (1765-1832), who also contemplated a history, extending over the early reigns of the House of Hanover. A fragment not exceeding that of Mr Fox, and a portion of introductory history descending to the reign of Elizabeth, formed the amount of the labours of this writer. The latter was given to the world in his lifetime, as the article of English History in Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia, and the fragment was published posthumously with a sequel by another writer, under the title of a *History of the*



*Revolution of 1688.* Another historical work by Sir James Mackintosh was a *Discourse on the Progress of Ethical and Political Science*, prefixed to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. His sketch of English history is less a detailed narrative of events, than a rapid, yet clear, profound, and philosophic view of the state and progress of society, law, government, and civilisation; in which the lessons of experience, the character of men and events, the circumstances which have promoted, retarded, and modified the social and political improvement of the English nation, are unfolded and judged with the acuteness of a philosopher, and the wisdom of a practical statesman. His style, though sometimes clumsy and inelegant, often rises to eloquence when he records the growth of liberty, or the influence of generous institutions.

A series of articles in the *Edinburgh Review* on historical personages of eminent note—the Earl of Chatham, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, and others—had prepared the public to expect, in a *History of England* from the same pen, a work exceeding in literary brilliancy all its predecessors. The writer here referred to is THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY, who had already distinguished himself as a statesman of the Whig party, and as a poet. The first two volumes of the history appeared in 1848, and at once justified the expectations which had been formed regarding the work. After a condensed but luminous view of the history of England down to the end of the reign of Charles II., the author commences a full narration of the history of James II., and details in the most interesting manner the remarkable series of events which led to the Revolution of 1688. Two volumes, bringing down the narrative of events to the peace of Ryswick, were added in 1855; and the merits of the author were soon afterwards acknowledged by his elevation to a British baronage, under the title of Lord Macaulay. At his lamented death, in 1859, he left fragments which subsequently

constituted a fifth volume. If we analyse the causes of the success of this book, we shall find that the principal one is the fresh, easy, and familiar manner in which men and their doings are brought before the reader's notice—the author deriving this power mainly from his intimate knowledge of the period of which he treats. With all its brilliant merits, the work must be considered as presenting only a party view of the subject; in which respect, however, it is serviceable, as affording a counterpoise to the cavalier history of Hume.

Besides a laborious composition on the *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church* (1809), the public has been indebted to Dr JOHN LINGARD, an English Catholic priest, for a *History of England till the Revolution of 1688*, consisting of fourteen volumes in octavo (1819–31). This performance has been translated into several languages, and was appointed by Charles X. to be the standard work on English history in the seminaries of France. Although the vindication of the Roman Catholic Church and clergy from the alleged misrepresentations of Protestant writers be a ruling object with Lingard, he is generally acknowledged to have written in a candid and dispassionate tone. He has had recourse to original sources of information, which he seems to have studied with diligence and caution; and on many points he gives new views of manners, events, and characters. Mr HENRY HALLAM was the author of a valuable work on the *State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, of a *History of European Literature*, and of a *Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VII. to the Death of George II.*; that is, a history treating chiefly of the progress of the constitution, which this author views in the spirit of the Whig party. The Anglo-Saxon period of our history has been treated with a great display of fresh materials, and many new views of our early institutions, by Sir FRANCIS PALGRAVE.

As a historian, Mr SOUTHEY displayed great industry

and research, an engaging and forcible style, and that affection for his subject which, when not carried to an extravagant length, imparts a charm to narrative. He was the author of a *History of Brasil* (1810), in three volumes quarto; *The Book of the Church*, an elegant summary of English ecclesiastical history; and a *History of the Peninsular War* (1823-28). For the last of these works he was qualified in a peculiar manner by his acquaintance with the languages of Spain and Portugal; but, even if his labours had not been diminished in value by the poetical rather than historical view which he gave of the motives of the Spanish insurgents, they would have been superseded by a work on the same subject (1828-31) by Colonel W. F. P. NAPIER, who combined, with masterly skill in the narration of events, the inestimable advantage of having himself witnessed, and acted a conspicuous part in, the greater number of those actions which he details.

Amongst many excellent historical works produced before 1830, the *History of India*, by Mr JAMES MILL; the *History of Persia*, by Sir JOHN MALCOLM; and the *Memoirs of Spain during the Reigns of Philip IV. and Charles II.*, by Mr JOHN DUNLOP, are entitled to be mentioned with respect.

Since that period, the greater accessibleness of materials has tempted many writers of ability to review periods formerly treated by others. The public has seen the national history during a large portion of the sixteenth century treated in a new light by Mr FROUDE, and some of the recent periods richly illustrated by the EARL OF STANHOPE, Mr MASSEY, and others. At the same time, Sir ARCHIBALD ALISON has written the annals of the great European struggle extending between 1792 and 1815 in a manner displaying great industry and care, though objectionable on the score of party bias. In the work of Mr ARTHUR HELPS, the *History of the Spanish Conquest of America*; in Mr GEORGE FINLAY'S *History of the Greek*

*Empire*; in Dean MILMAN'S *History of Latin Christianity*; and the *History of the Eastern Church* by ARTHUR P. STANLEY; we recognise the highest literary graces in connection with most creditable industry. A work of an equally laborious kind, but challenging controversy by its peculiar opinions, has been commenced by THOMAS BUCKLE, under the title of a *History of Civilisation in England*. There have also been some most respectable efforts in this walk by American writers. The conquests of Mexico and Peru, and the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, are the subjects illustrated by Mr PRESCOTT. Mr BANCROFT has with equal success given us a classic record of the general history of the English colonies in America and of the War of Independence. More recently, a *History of the War in the Netherlands*, by Mr J. L. MOTTLEY, has been placed side by side with the best productions of the living English historians.

#### BIOGRAPHERS.

Biography is a department of literature which British writers have at no time done much to cultivate; and those who have written books of that kind during the present era, are in general the authors of more important compositions in other departments. It will not, therefore, be necessary to do much more than advert to the principal biographical works which have appeared during the last fifty years.

*The Life of Robert Burns*, published in 1800, in connection with the works of the poet, by JAMES CURRIE, is remarkable for the union of taste and good feeling with which it treats a very difficult subject, and for much information respecting the character and habits of the Scottish peasantry during the eighteenth century.

In 1803, Mr WILLIAM HAYLEY (1745-1820), who

enjoyed a temporary fame as a poet, gave the first example, in his *Life of Cowper*, of a species of biographical composition which seems to be now acknowledged as in some respects the best. In the life of Cowper, the subject of the memoir was caused to display his own character, and to commemorate many biographical incidents, by his letters—the biographer supplying only such a slender thread of narrative as was sufficient to connect the whole, and to render it intelligible. *The Life of Dr Beattie*, by Sir WILLIAM FORBES, published in 1806, though too voluminous for the importance of the subject, was a pleasing example of the same kind of biography. In the same year, Lord HOLLAND gave to the world an *Account of the Life and Writings of Lope Felix de Vega*, the celebrated Spanish dramatist—a work displaying some of the unskilfulness of one not accustomed to write with a view to publication, but at the same time distinguished by much liveliness, and by a pleasing liberality of sentiment.

In 1812, Dr THOMAS M'CRIE, a dissenting Presbyterian minister, settled in Edinburgh, published *The Life of John Knox*, which might, in other words, be described as a history of the Reformation in Scotland, and of the progress of literature in that country during a great part of the sixteenth century. The popular reception of this work encouraged the author to write *The Life of Andrew Melville*, which was published in 1819, and might be described as a continuation of the history of religion and literature from the period where it was dropped in the *Life of Knox*. These works display great research, and express with much vigour and ability the views of the Presbyterian party regarding the events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were followed by histories of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Spain and Italy, by the same author. *The Life of Nelson*, published in 1813 by Mr SOUTHEY, with the unambitious purpose of affording to common sailors a view of the transac-

tions of that hero, is now generally acknowledged to be the best biographical production of the age. It is brief and simple; but, while apparently free from effort or design, it is in reality a masterpiece of literary art. Mr Southey afterwards wrote *The Life of Wesley* and *Lives of the British Admirals*. His pure language and graceful manner of composition seem to have been peculiarly adapted for biography.

*The Life of the Admirable Crichton* (1819), and *The Life of Sir Thomas Craig* (1823), by MR PATRICK FRASER TYTLER, already mentioned as the author of the History of Scotland, are chiefly valuable for the light they throw on the ancient state of learning and literature in Scotland. The same author afterwards produced a series of *Lives of Scottish Worthies*, and a *Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*. His patient habits of research, and the pure, graceful, and mellifluous flow of his language, qualified him in a high degree to shine in biographical composition. Mr THOMAS MOORE, whose poetical talents obtained for him so high a celebrity, was the author of a *Life of Sheridan* (1825), *Memoirs of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, and *Notices of the Life of Lord Byron* (1830). In 1825, a *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, on the same scale with Southey's *Life of Nelson*, was undertaken by Sir WALTER SCOTT, but eventually swelled out to nine bulky volumes, and bore in other respects little resemblance to its model. The subject was one to which the sympathies of the author could not easily be reconciled; his information, and his sense of many points of national feeling, and of the relations of parties, were defective; and, what was perhaps the greatest fault of the book, it extended beyond the space which is convenient for the greater proportion of modern readers. Hence, while the animation of the narrative was such as might have been expected from this wonderful writer, the work was generally considered as a failure. *The Lives of the Novelists*, contributed by the same author to an edition of their works, and afterwards

published separately, are much superior to the *Life of Napoleon*, and show that he was very highly qualified for this department of literature.

The memoirs attached by Mr EDMUND LODGE to a splendid collection of the Portraits of Illustrious Persons, are distinguished by great research, and no less dignity and elegance. Out of many other contributions to biography, it may suffice to mention the *Lives of Burns* and of *Sir Walter Scott*, by Mr JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART; *The Life of George Buchanan*, by Dr DAVID IRVING; *The Life of Alexander the Great*, by the Rev. Mr JOHN WILLIAMS; *The Life of George Stephenson*, by SAMUEL SMILES; *The Life of Goethe*, by Mr LEWES; *The Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Chief-justices*, by Lord CAMPBELL; and *The Lives of the Queens of England*, by Miss AGNES STRICKLAND. It must not be overlooked, that besides numerous memoirs of literary men, written for periodicals, and in connection with editions of their works, England has produced, during the period under notice, three General Biographical Dictionaries; one in ten volumes quarto, published between the years 1799 and 1815, by Dr JOHN AIKIN; another, in thirty-two volumes octavo, re-edited with great additions, between 1812 and 1816, by Mr ALEXANDER CHALMERS; and a third, in a more concise form, by Mr H. J. ROSE.

#### METAPHYSICAL WRITERS.

The science of the human mind has not been so favourite an object of study during the last, as in the immediately preceding age. The so-called common-sense views of Reid, which proceeded upon the assumption, that there are certain native powers in the mind—such as perception, memory, conception, abstraction, judgment, reason, taste, moral perception, and cen-

sciousness ; and which expounded these faculties, without asserting that they formed the whole of our mental constitution ; were adopted with zeal by his pupil, Mr DUGALD STEWART (1753-1828), Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. This gentleman published, in 1792, the first volume of an elaborate work, entitled *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, of which a second volume appeared in 1813, and a further continuation in 1827. He was also the author of *Outlines of Moral Philosophy for the Use of Students* (1793), *Philosophical Essays* (1810), and some compositions of less importance. His writings, though, by his own confession, they leave a true and complete philosophy still in expectation, have been received with the highest marks of public approbation, on account of the singular elegance of their composition, and the cheerful, benevolent, and elevating views of human nature, and the progress of man as a social being, which they present. While Stewart was spending his latter years in retirement, Dr THOMAS BROWN (1778-1820), who, though nominally only his assistant in the chair of moral philosophy, had undertaken the entire performance of his duties, developed views considerably at variance with those of Reid, and gave a new turn to this line of philosophic inquiry. Without that majestic and eloquent flow of language from which much of the celebrity of Stewart has arisen, Dr Brown excelled him in those acute and discriminating powers of intellect which are best fitted for the prosecution of metaphysical investigations. The latter was thus able to trace back some of the mental faculties assumed and named by Reid, to others more primitive and elementary. He taught that all feelings and thoughts are the mind itself, existing in certain conditions, and that consciousness is not a distinct faculty, but a general term for all the states of the intellect. The philosophy of Brown, of which it is impossible here to give a more minute account, is comprehended in his lectures, which were



published after his death, and continue to be used as a class-book.

At the time when Brown was endeavouring to analyse the mind into its primitive powers, the same task was undertaken by a class of inquirers, originating in Germany, and afterwards extended into France, Britain, and America, who professed to have ascertained by observation, that each of those powers resides in a particular portion of the brain, the extent or volume of which, in ordinary circumstances, indicates the comparative energy of the faculty. The phrenologists, as these inquirers are called, divide the mind into upwards of thirty distinct powers and dispositions, each of which they assert to be capable of exertion, independently, or in combination with others; and to these simple or compound operations they trace every action and expression, or other manifestation of character, exemplified by human beings, every individual being understood to have the various powers and dispositions in different degrees of energy. The most eminent expositor of this science was Mr GEORGE COMEE, of Edinburgh, author of a *System of Phrenology*, an *Essay on the Constitution of Man*, and other works.

Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, in his *Discourse on Ethical Philosophy*, admitted the supremacy of the moral sentiments, but insisted on utility or beneficial tendency as the great criterion of their action.

As a popular expositor of the views of the Scotch metaphysicians, respectful reference is due to Dr ABERCROMBIE, of Edinburgh, whose *Inquiry concerning the Intellectual Powers*, and *Philosophy of the Moral Feelings*, have at once proved that such works may be rendered generally intelligible, and that the public will read, if they are enabled to understand. Of a sterner class is Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON, Professor of Logic in the University of Edinburgh, whose various metaphysical writings must remain an imperishable monument of his extraordinary learning, as well as originality, in this

department. Of a like grave class was JAMES MILL, author of an *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*. He is a powerful thinker, but harsh and dogmatic. His son, JOHN STUART MILL, has presented a *System of Logic* (1843), which might be cited as one disproof of the complaint, that the literature of our age is essentially frivolous. This is a work displaying masterly powers of thought, and great industry on the part of the author. It defines and adopts logic in a larger sense than is customary—namely, as the ‘science which treats of the operations of the human understanding in the pursuit of truth.’

#### WRITERS IN DIVINITY.

It is impossible, in the present little treatise, to give a particular account of all the clergymen and laymen who have distinguished themselves since 1780 by their writings on religious topics. We can only attempt a brief sketch of a few whose names are somewhat more conspicuous than the rest.

BELILEY PORTEUS (1731–1803), Bishop of London, a divine of the highest personal worth, obtained a lasting reputation by his sermons, published in various forms, and by a great variety of other works, treating chiefly of the doctrines and discipline of the church. SAMUEL HORSLEY (1733–1806), Bishop of St Asaph, is celebrated as a keen and enthusiastic advocate of some of those tenets of the church which in all ages have been most exposed to controversy. His chief antagonist was the equally celebrated Dr JOSEPH PRIESTLEY (1733–1804), whose publications in favour of the Unitarian views of Christianity attracted more attention, in his own time, than those scientific inquiries and discourses for which he is now chiefly esteemed. Another of Bishop Horsley’s opponents was GILBERT WAKEFIELD

(1756-1801), a most industrious scholar and biblical critic, who had retired, for conscientious reasons, from a charge in the Established Church. Mr Wakefield's principal works are, *An Inquiry into the Opinions of the Three First Centuries concerning the Person of Jesus Christ* (1784), *A Translation of the New Testament, with Notes* (1792), and a pamphlet against the interference of Great Britain with the French Revolution, for which he suffered two years' imprisonment.

Perhaps the most extensively useful religious writer of the period was Dr WILLIAM PALEY (1743-1805), who rose from a humble origin to be Archdeacon of Carlisle, and was a man of extraordinary single-heartedness and worth. His first work, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785), is one of great value, though its conclusions on the foundation of moral distinctions, on subscriptions to articles of religion, on the British constitution, and several other topics, have been frequently assailed by equally able writers. His *Horæ Paulinæ* (1790), *Evidences of Christianity* (1794), and *Natural Theology* (1802), ought to be read in the reverse order of their publication—the *Natural Theology*, as a most ingenious, familiar, and convincing demonstration of the existence of a Deity from his works; the *Evidences*, as an equally ingenious argument for the truth of the revelations attributed to him in the Old and New Testaments; and the *Horæ Paulinæ*, as following up the whole with a very powerful exposition of that department of the evidences of Christianity which rests upon the epistles of St Paul. The writings of Paley, all of which refer to the highest and most important questions upon which human reason can be exercised, are less remarkable for eloquence than for minute and elaborate reasoning, an easy and familiar style of illustration, and a vigilant and comprehensive sagacity, which pursues an argument through all its details, and never fails to bring it clearly out at last. His works have been very extensively circulated and read; and the *Evidences* must

still be considered, notwithstanding many rivals, as the standard book on the subject.

RICHARD WATSON (1737-1816), Bishop of Llandaff, and, like Paley, liberal in his views both of church and state, was another of the great divines who adorned the latter portion of the eighteenth century. His principal works are, *An Apology for Christianity* (1776), written in one month, for the purpose of defending religion against the attack made upon it in Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and *An Apology for the Bible*, published in 1796, as a refutation of the anti-christian writings of Thomas Paine. The other compositions of this eminent prelate are principally sermons, and charges to the clergy of his diocese.

The Established Church has more recently derived honour from the labours of JOHN OWEN, rector of Paglesham; Bishop MANT, joint-editor of a highly-esteemed commentary on the Bible; CHARLES SIMEON, whose *Horæ Homileticæ*, in twenty-one volumes, contain the rudiments of between two and three thousand sermons, referring to every part of the Sacred Writings, and designed to aid the clergy in their pulpit compositions; and the Bishops SUMNER and BLOMFIELD.

Of the many able and useful writers who have risen in the same period among the Dissenters, the most brilliantly gifted was the Rev. ROBERT HALL (1764-1831), a Baptist minister, successively at Cambridge, Leicester, and Bristol, and perhaps the most famous preacher of his time in England. The magnificent and forcible eloquence of this eminent person is not lost, like that of many other orators, in print: his published sermons and tracts are found to possess nearly the same power of impressing the reader which the preacher exercised in the pulpit. After the death of Hall, there remained no pulpit orator who could be placed beside Dr THOMAS CHALMERS, a clergyman of the Established Church of Scotland, and at one time Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh. With great defects of

style, and other blemishes, the sermons of Dr Chalmers possess a power of melting, convincing, and delighting, which can be the result only of an extraordinary degree of genius. Dr ADAM CLARKE (1763-1832), a Methodist preacher, is not less eminent as a biblical annotator and Scripture critic. His edition of the Bible, which has the advantage of his vast Oriental learning, is a book of the highest reputation; and he was the author of another laborious work, entitled a *Bibliographical Dictionary*. Dr Clarke was admired by men of all religious denominations for his profound knowledge and mild unassuming deportment.

This series may appropriately close with a reference to the labours of Dr JOHN KITTO, as an illustrator of the Scriptures. His various works in this department, including his *Pictorial Bible*, would have been a venerable monument of ability and industry in any writer, but become invested with an element of the wonderful, when it is known that the author forced his way to learning through the most unfavourable circumstances, including that of an entire want of the sense of hearing.

#### TRAVELLERS AND VOYAGERS.

In the department of travels and voyages, this period exhibits an increase of writers, proportioned to the increasing spirit of enterprise which has animated natives of Britain in exploring distant countries and seas. JAMES BRUCE of Kinnaird, in Stirlingshire, a gentleman of singular intrepidity and extensive accomplishments, devoted the year 1768, and the five which followed, to a journey along the northern coast of Africa, and into Abyssinia—the main end which he had in view being the discovery of the source of the Nile, which no European had ever before reached. After succeeding in this undertaking, he returned to his native country; and in 1790, published an account of his travels in five quarto

volumes, with an additional volume of drawings. The more extraordinary details of this work were doubted at the time of its appearance, but have since been confirmed by other travellers into Abyssinia, of whom the chief are Lord Valentia and Mr Henry Salt.

The voyages of the celebrated circumnavigator, Captain JAMES COOK, which commenced in 1768, and were prosecuted, with but few interruptions, till 1779, might have been noticed with more propriety perhaps under the preceding period. The history of the first expedition of this great discoverer, as well as of the undertakings of his predecessors, Byron, Wallis, and Carteret, was written by Dr John Hawkesworth, who has been already mentioned. The second voyage was described by the navigator himself, who also brought down the narrative of his third enterprise till within a short period of his death.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, a strong wish took possession of the public mind that the interior of the large continent of Africa should be explored, with a view to commerce; and the task was undertaken by Mr MUNGO PARK, a Scottish surgeon, who, in 1795, travelled from the Senegal to the Niger, and traced the latter river for a considerable way through a well-peopled country. A history of this expedition was published in 1799, and is a work of much interest. A second journey, undertaken by Mr Park in 1805, terminated in the destruction of his own life, and that of most of his companions; and of this enterprise an account appeared in 1815. In 1822, and the two subsequent years, a journey into the same vast continent, from the vicinity of Tripoli, was performed by Major DENHAM, Captain CLAPPERTON, and Dr OUDNEY, who made some important discoveries, though they did not succeed in reaching the Niger. A narrative of this expedition, chiefly written by Denham, was published in 1826.

Of a journey subsequently undertaken by Clapperton,

in which he penetrated from the Guinea coast to Soccatoo, where he lost his life, an account was given to the world by his attendant, RICHARD LANDER, who afterwards engaged in a similar expedition, and was successful in discovering the course of the Niger towards the sea. The latter journey was described in three volumes of the Family Library. More recently, the missionary explorations of Dr DAVID LIVINGSTONE in South Africa have formed the materials of a highly attractive book.

After the conclusion of the French revolutionary war, the British government turned its attention to the discovery of a passage to Asia along the supposed northern coasts of America; and in 1817, an expedition sailed under the charge of Captain JOHN ROSS, with Captain EDWARD PARRY as second in command. Another expedition in 1819-20, a third in 1821-2-3, a fourth in 1824-5, and a fifth in 1827, under Parry alone, have all been commemorated in large books, illustrated by engravings; while a journey undertaken in concert with the nautical expeditions, by Sir JOHN FRANKLIN, has been described in a similar manner. Notwithstanding the failure of the main object of these expeditions, the works in which they are narrated possess a very high interest, not only on account of the new seas and territories which they bring into view, but from the many singular forms of nature depicted in them, and the ingenious devices which were necessarily resorted to for the sustenance of human life under the extreme cold of an arctic climate. The subsequent voyages of Captain JAMES ROSS, of Captain M'CLINTOCK for the discovery of the fate of a second unfortunate expedition of Franklin, and some others, are the subjects of works more or less voluminous, and all making certain additions to our stock of geographical knowledge.

Archdeacon COXE, whose historical works have been already mentioned, published in early life his *Travels in Switzerland and the northern kingdoms of Europe*, with

an elaborate work descriptive of the discoveries made by the Russians between Asia and America. A tour through the north of Europe was also published in 1805, by Sir JOHN CARR, who was the author of several other books of travels, now forgotten. No English traveller, however, has ever attained so high a reputation as Dr EDWARD DANIEL CLARKE (1767-1822), a clergyman, educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, and who finally became professor of mineralogy in that university. In 1799, this eminent person began to travel through Denmark, Sweden, Lapland, Finland, Russia, Tartary, Circassia, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Greece, and Turkey, returning, in 1802, through Germany and France; and after various works of inferior importance, referring to objects of antiquity which he had brought with him to England, he published an account of his extensive and laborious tour, in six quarto volumes (1810-23). For the duties of a traveller and describer of travels, Dr Clarke possessed unrivalled qualifications—great acquired knowledge, unshrinking courage and power of enduring fatigue, and the ability to narrate what he observed in a lively, graphic, and agreeable manner.

The most valuable portion of the work of Dr Clarke is that which refers to the countries adjacent to the head of the Mediterranean, which, from their connection with Scriptural history, possess a peculiar interest in the eyes of Europeans, while their political condition causes them to be less frequently visited and described than many states which do not attract nearly so much of our regard. Since the return of Dr Clarke, several intelligent travellers have been induced to brave the dangers of a journey through those countries, in order that the British public might be made more intimately acquainted with them. JOHN LOUIS BURCKHARDT, a Swiss, in the employment of the African Association of England, spent two years and a half in Syria and Palestine, and afterwards performed some



most adventurous journeys in northern and eastern Africa and Arabia, personating a Mahometan for the purpose of acquainting himself thoroughly with the religious ceremonies of the nations, though a discovery of the deception would have subjected him to instant death. This enterprising traveller died in 1817 at Cairo, having previously sent to England the whole of his journals, from which accounts of his travels in Syria, in Nubia and Egypt, and in Arabia, have since been published. At a period somewhat later, Mr J. S. BUCKINGHAM, formerly the conductor of a newspaper in British India, performed an overland journey from that country to England, travelling through Mesopotamia, Media, Persia, Syria, and Arabia, which he afterwards described both by books and by lectures. In 1822, Sir ROBERT KER PORTER, who had previously written *Sketches of Sweden and Russia*, published *Travels in Georgia, Persia, and Armenia*; and tours in Palestine have subsequently been given to the world by Mr CARNE and Mr RAE WILSON. By the researches and observations of these and other intelligent individuals, much new light has been thrown upon the geography of the regions mentioned in the Bible, and also on the manners and events alluded to both in the earlier and the later portions of the Sacred Writings.

The interest which the ancient literature and history of Greece and Rome possess in the eyes of cultivated Europeans, has been, in like manner, the cause of much travelling in those countries. A journey undertaken in Italy, in 1802, by the Rev. JOHN CHETWODE EUSTACE, with a special reference to the objects of classical renown, is commemorated with much elegance and enthusiasm, but little correctness, in a work published in 1813. At the same time appeared Mr JOSEPH FORSYTH'S *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters, during an Excursion in Italy in the years 1802 and 1803*; a work of less eloquence and feeling than the classical tour of Eustace, but more vigorous, acute, and epigrammatic, and decidedly

the best English book upon the subject. *The Diary of an Invalid*, by Mr HENRY MATTHEWS, is a lively and agreeable description of an Italian tour, though not to be trusted as an authority. Miss WALDIE's work, entitled *Rome in the Nineteenth Century*, is lively and intelligent; and Lady MORGAN's *Italy*, whatever may be its faults, contains a faithful description of some portions of Italian society. Among many other recent productions on the same subject, we have only space to mention the accurate *Description of the Antiquities of Rome*, by Dr BURTON, the elegant *Observations on Italy*, by Mr JOHN BELL, and Mr BROCKEDON's illustrated works respecting the scenery of the Alps.

A work, entitled *Travels in Italy and Greece*, by Mr H. W. WILLIAMS, is valuable for its remarks on the ancient works of art preserved in these states. A more elaborate book on the latter country is *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece*, published in 1819, in two volumes quarto, by Mr EDWARD DODWELL. A work, entitled *Greece, Historical and Descriptive*, by Dr CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, may be cited as one calculated to convey a comprehensive idea of the features of this classical land, within a reasonable compass.

Of those voyagers and travellers who have related the wonders of distant parts of the earth in an animated and pleasing manner, there is none who ranks higher than Captain BASIL HALL. The first work of this able officer was *An Account of a Voyage of Discovery to the West Coast of Corea, and the Great Loo Choo Island* (1818), of which the great charm consisted in the moral interest with which he invested the account of a primitive and simple nation of Chinese, who inhabit that portion of the earth. In 1824, Captain Hall published *Extracts from a Journal Written on the Coasts of Chili, Peru, and Mexico*, being the result of his observations in those countries during a residence of three years; a work which also obtained high public approbation, chiefly for its lively sketches of the manners and customs of the South

American republics. A subsequent work, descriptive of the United States, met with a less favourable reception, on account of the censure which it bestowed upon the character of the people of that country, and the political inferences which it drew from that character; but in his *Fragments of Voyages and Travels*, published still more recently, the powers of the author, as a describer of incident and adventure, have been more admired, perhaps, than in any of his preceding publications.

Innumerable other writers have described the nearer European countries, the United States, and the various British colonies; some of them characterised by dry accuracy in matters of fact, others by powers of lively description, and the art of giving an interest to what they relate. Of the latter sort, a remarkable example was found in Mr HENRY DAVID INGLIS, author of works referring to Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the Channel Islands, and Ireland. The natural scenery of our own island has been also described during the present age in a series of agreeable books by the Rev. WILLIAM GILPIN (1724-1804), vicar of Boldre, and prebend of Sarum.

Scarcely any English work relating to a foreign country has ever excited so much interest as one entitled *Nineveh and its Remains* (1849), by Dr A. H. LAYARD. The author had, by unparalleled exertions, overcome the various difficulties which obstructed an examination of the ruins of ancient cities on the banks of the Euphrates. Underneath a series of shapeless mounds, where now only the tent of the wandering child of the desert is pitched, he found the remains of Nineveh, and other Assyrian cities lost sight of by mankind since the seventh century before Christ. He succeeded in exhuming and sending to England many magnificent examples of ancient sculpture, in the highest degree illustrative of the history and the religious feelings of ancient Eastern nations. The floors and lower chambers of many palaces of the Assyrian sovereigns, with their elaborate

decorations, were also brought to light, and accurately described by this highly meritorious traveller.

Of collections of voyages and travels, one was published by Mr JOHN PINKERTON, the Scottish antiquary, in nineteen large volumes quarto; another by Mr ROBERT KERR, in eighteen volumes octavo. A compilation, managed in a different manner, has been published, in a long series of small volumes, by Mr JOSIAH CONDER, under the title of *The Modern Traveller*; in this work a summary description of each country is given from a careful and judicious survey of the various accounts of voyages and travels relating to it, by which much expense, and also much pains, is spared to the reader.

#### MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.

Under this head may be ranged a great variety of literary men, whose principal writings are not such as to give them a title to rank in any of the preceding sections. One of the most eminent is Mr ISAAC D'ISRAELI, who, from the year 1791, when he published the first series of his *Curiosities of Literature*, employed a mind of great activity, acuteness, and no small share of wit, in a series of compositions chiefly referring to authors and their works. His *Curiosities of Literature*, which finally extended to eight volumes, is one of the most pleasant miscellanies in the language. His chief other works are his *Essay on the Literary Character* (1795), *Quarrels of Authors*, *Calamities of Authors*, and *Commentaries on the Reign of Charles I.* JOHN MILLAR (1735–1801), Professor of Civil Law in the University of Glasgow, was one of the earliest writers on general politics, and gained considerable distinction by his essay on the *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771), and his *Historical View of the English Government* (1787), works composed in a clear and forcible, though not very attractive manner,

and conveying much sound and useful information. In 1798 appeared the first edition of the celebrated *Essay on Population*, by the Rev. THOMAS ROBERT MALTHUS, afterwards Professor of Political Economy at the East India Company's College in Hertfordshire; a book which naturally attracted much notice, as its object was to show that the numbers of the human race are apt to increase more rapidly than the means for maintaining them. JOHN FOSTER (1770-1843), a dissenting clergyman, may be placed here: his *Essays*, and a tract entitled *The Evils of Popular Ignorance*, with many contributions to the Eclectic Review, display rich powers of thought, and will probably continue for a long time to maintain a hold of the English mind.

The close of the last century, and the early years of the present, were remarkable for a multitude of antiquarian writers, some of whom attained great eminence. JOSEPH STRUTT (1749-1802) was the author of two works of vast research and highly-curious contents—*A Complete View of the Dresses of the People of England*, and *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, both illustrated by plates. JOSEPH RITSON, a man of very eccentric character, is remarkable for his many publications concerning English literary antiquities; and GEORGE CHALMERS, who has already been mentioned in the class of historical writers, rendered himself highly serviceable in the same department. *The Illustrations of Shakspeare*, published in 1807 by Mr FRANCIS DOUCE, is a work of singular research and curiosity, reviving numberless traits of ancient manners, of which it might have been expected that all memory would have long since been lost. A still more useful labourer in the same field is the Rev. Mr T. D. FOSBROOKE, author of *British Monachism*, an account of the private lives of the monks and nuns of England previous to the Reformation (1802), and of an *Encyclopædia of Antiquities* (1824), both of them works of the highest value. During the same period, Messrs BRITTON and BRAYLEY published

many works respecting British topography and antiquities, illustrated by splendid engravings.

SIR SAMUEL EGERTON BRYDGES was an author who, to tasks chiefly of an antiquarian kind, brought a mind more poetical and aspiring than those which are usually found engaged in such pursuits. His principal works are *Censura Literaria* (1805-9), in ten volumes; the *British Bibliographer*, in three volumes; and an enlarged edition of *Collins's English Peerage* (1812), in nine volumes. In these and a few other publications, where he lent his highly-respectable powers of mind to the adornment and elevation of subjects not in themselves attractive, few writers have been more successful. In a walk somewhat similar, the Rev. THOMAS FROGNALL DIBDIN attained a high reputation. He was the author of *An Introduction to the Rare and Valuable Editions of the Greek and Roman Classics* (1802), *Topographical Antiquities of England*, 4 volumes (1810-19), a work descriptive of the books in the library of Earl Spencer (1814), a *Bibliographical Tour*, in which he describes the principal libraries of the continent, and the *Library Companion*, which is designed as a guide in the selection and purchase of books. The most of Mr Dibdin's publications are splendid in typography and embellishment, and therefore very expensive. They are enlivened with numberless whimsical remarks and anecdotes.

The rise of periodical literature and criticism has been noticed in the preceding section. During the present era, the Gentleman's and the Scots Magazines, with some others, and the Monthly and Critical Reviews, continued to exist, but without experiencing an improvement at all proportionate to that which was taking place in almost all other departments of literature. The critical periodicals had sunk into a peculiarly feeble condition, when, in October 1802, a few young men, just emancipated from the Edinburgh University, commenced the publication of a journal entitled *The Edinburgh Review*, which was to be published quarterly, and to notice only the more

important class of books. The masterly and original character of the essays which appeared in this work, and the pitiless severity exercised towards writers of questionable ability, instantaneously attracted and fixed the public attention, and threw into shade all other existing works of the same kind. The gentlemen chiefly engaged in conducting it were—Mr FRANCIS JEFFREY, afterwards a Scottish judge under the designation of Lord Jeffrey, Dr THOMAS BROWN, whose metaphysical works have already been mentioned, and Mr SYDNEY SMITH, a native of England, and subsequently one of the canons residentiary of St Paul's. The strength of the work, in the earlier part of its course, lay in the brilliant and epigrammatic style of Mr Jeffrey; and it was afterwards sustained by the contributions of Mr HENRY (now Lord) BROUGHAM, Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, and other writers. From the first, the Edinburgh Review advocated the principles of the Whig party; though it was not for some years that the fashion arose of admitting directly political dissertations.

This celebrated publication had obtained an extensive circulation and a high place in public esteem, when, in 1809, a similar work advocating Tory principles was commenced in London, under the title of *The Quarterly Review*, the editor being Mr WILLIAM GIFFORD, who has already been adverted to as a poet. The prominent qualifications of this gentleman were strong common sense and perception of the ridiculous, ready command of language, great and varied stores of information, and irresistible power of sarcasm. His talents and principles gave the work such weight and respectability, as soon brought to its support men of the highest eminence not only in the universities and the retirement of rustic clerical charges, but in the most conspicuous scenes of public life. SOUTHEY, HEBER, MILMAN, CANNING, CROKER, and BARROW, were among those who contributed to the earlier numbers. After the death of Gifford, the editorship was committed, in 1825, to Mr JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART,

by whom the work was conducted with undiminished reputation for upwards of thirty years.

While the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews addressed themselves to the two chief parties of the nation, a want was at length felt for a similar organ to give expression to the sentiments of a third party—the Radicals or ultra-Liberals—who had gradually been rising into importance since the conclusion of the French Revolutionary war. Accordingly, in 1824, *The Westminster Review* was commenced by a small body of literary men of this denomination of politics. More recently, continental literature has been reported in a similar manner in *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, now, however, absorbed into *The Westminster*. *The New Quarterly*, *The British Quarterly*, and *The North British*, are other journals representing different religious bodies, and all of them conducted with respectable ability.

For many years after the Edinburgh Review had regenerated the critical species of periodicals, the magazines, or literary miscellanies, remained in their former languid state. At length, in 1817, Mr WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, bookseller in Edinburgh, in correspondence with a few literary friends, gave a similar impulse to this latter species of work, by the commencement of the magazine which has since passed under his name. Instead of the tame literary essays, and topographical and antiquarian notices which formerly filled the most of this class of periodicals, *Blackwood's Magazine* presented articles of fiction, criticism, and observation, equal to the best compositions of the kind which appeared in any other shape; to which were in time added political disquisitions of great force and eloquence, in favour of Tory or Conservative principles. A new standard being thus erected for magazine literature, attempts were made, with greater or less success, to elevate the character of the other works of the same kind, and also to originate new ones on a similar plan. Of the improved works, *The New Monthly Magazine* is



chiefly worthy of notice ; and of those which have since arisen, may be mentioned *Fraser's Magazine*, *Bentley's Miscellany*, *The Dublin University Magazine*, and the *Cornhill Magazine* of Mr THACKERAY. The talent generally shown in the journals of our age is such as would have only appeared in a much higher walk fifty years ago.

The individual now to be mentioned is one whose labours are regarded with entirely different feelings by different parties, and by different nations. Those who believe that innovations in government and jurisprudence are almost invariably mischievous, hold him as a dreamer, who would be altogether contemptible, if it were not for his power of injuring the interests of society ; while those who desire and encourage change, represent him as one of the greatest benefactors of his species. JEREMY BENTHAM (1748-1832), originally a barrister, devoted himself at an early period of life to the study of the principles of legislation, for which it seems to be nowhere doubted that he possessed the primary qualification in a mind of extraordinary capacity, ardour, and benevolence. His first publication was *A Fragment on Government* (1776), in refutation of the views advanced in Blackstone's Commentaries. He had before this period conceived the notion, which all his works are designed to enforce and apply, that the chief aim of government ought to be *the greatest happiness of the greatest number*, a principle for the development of which he believed republican or democratic institutions to be absolutely necessary. In 1787, he published a *Defence of Usury, showing the Impolicy of the Present Legal Restraints on Pecuniary Bargains* ; and he soon after engaged in a series of tracts, addressed to the leaders of the French Revolution, for the improvement of their legislative and judicial establishments, and also for the better management of colonies and prisons. From that period to the conclusion of his life, Mr Bentham never perceived a possibility of introducing his views with advan-

tage into any part of the world without making the attempt. Having learned that a code of laws had been desired by the Russian government for upwards of a century, he made offer of his services to the Emperor Alexander, who answered with a polite refusal and a present of a ring. Without even opening the package which contained the trinket, he immediately returned it, being resolved that his exertions for what he thought the benefit of his species should be prosecuted without any profit to himself. The first of his great theoretical works was *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789); the next, entitled *Discourses on Civil and Penal Legislation*, was recomposed from his own manuscripts, in the French language, by Etienne Dumont, and published at Paris in 1802. *A Theory of Punishments and Rewards* was published under the same circumstances in 1811. *A Treatise on Judicial Evidence* (1813); *Paper relative to Codification and Public Instruction* (1817); *The Book of [Political] Fallacies* (1824); and *A Constitutional Code*, are the principal works composed during the later part of his life. With all his profound thinking, Mr Bentham did not possess the art of writing in an easily intelligible manner: he bewilders his readers by minute methodical subdivisions, and newly-compounded words, designed to convey ideas with more than usual clearness. It is therefore remarked that he has received most approbation for those works which had first passed through another mind and another language. His fame took its rise from translations; and a French author remarks, not without justice, that it has only of late come to England, after making the tour of the globe.

That the unpopularity of the writings of this eminent person arises from no indifference on the part of the public to the important subjects of which they treat, is sufficiently proved by the encouragement afforded during the early years of the nineteenth century to almost every kind of author who endeavoured to expound the

doctrines of general politics and political economy. The age has indeed been rather conspicuously characterised by efforts to promote, both by doctrine and practice, the improvement of the social state of nations. Of a body of writers of this description, who have chiefly arisen since the peace of 1814, one of the first, in point of time, is DAVID RICARDO (1772-1823), a gentleman of Jewish extraction, and latterly a member of the House of Commons. In an *Essay on Rent*, he adopted views which have since been much controverted; but his treatise entitled *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, affords a luminous exposition of the origin and fluctuations of national wealth and expenditure. *The Elements of Political Economy*, by MR JAMES MILL, *The Principles of Political Economy*, by MR J. R. McCULLOCH, and *Definitions in Political Economy*, by MR MALTHUS, are the most approved works from which a knowledge of the fundamental truths of this science is to be obtained. All of these writers, as well as Dr RICHARD WHATELY (Archbishop of Dublin) in his *Lectures on Political Economy*, lean to what are called liberal views of the science and of general politics. For works in which the opposite opinions are advocated, reference may be made to the *Essay on the Distribution of Wealth and Sources of Taxation*, by the Rev. RICHARD JONES; *Lectures on the Mercantile Theory of Wealth*, and on *Population*, by MR WILLIAM NASSAU SENIOR, Professor of Political Economy at Oxford; and *The Law of Population, a Treatise in Disproof of the Superfecundity of Human Beings*, by MR MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER. During the period just alluded to, the quarterly critical journals have abounded in disquisitions on this science, tinged in each case with the professed political opinions of the respective works in which such disquisitions have appeared.

A new style, as it may be called, in the *belles lettres*, combining a strong relish of the beautiful in nature and art, and the tender and agitating in the concerns of

human life, with much puerile conceit, exaggeration, and love of paradox, has been practised by a few modern writers, some of whom were connected by ties of friendship or by local circumstances. The most conspicuous of these is WILLIAM HAZLITT, originally a painter, afterwards an author by profession, and who died at no advanced period of life in 1830. In criticisms on paintings, theatrical performances, and poetry, this gentleman acquired great temporary distinction, as much perhaps on account of the bold and eccentric manner in which he wrote, as from any sincere appreciation of the value of his opinions on the part of his readers. Besides numerous contributions to periodical works, he gave to the world critical works, entitled *The Characters of Shakspeare's Plays* (1817), *A View of the [Modern] English Stage* (1818), *Lectures on English Poetry* (1818), and two further volumes of lectures, respectively referring to the English comic writers, and to the dramatic literature of the age of Elizabeth. Notwithstanding all their extravagance, there were brilliancies of thought and diction in these works which fixed the attention of many readers, and undoubtedly aided in reviving the taste which now exists for our early literature. Some essays on modern characters were published by Mr Hazlitt, under the title of *The Spirit of the Age*, and some sketches of modern manners from his pen appeared in *The Round Table*, and other periodical works. He was also the author of a *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, in four volumes.

Mr WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, with higher qualifications as a scholar, and in every respect a more exalted species of genius, is distinguished by many of the peculiarities just described. His chief work is one styled *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen* (1824), in which he brings before the notice of the reader groups of the deceased great from all periods of history, and even some of the living, whom he makes the vehicle for conveying his own thoughts on almost

every conceivable subject. The work displays great originality, acuteness, and learning, spoiled by many absurdities, and a style of singularly nervous and pure English, rendered ridiculous by a new mode of spelling. In the same class of writers must be ranked Mr LEIGH HUNT, whose poetry has already been described. This gentleman published, in several forms, periodical and otherwise, essays, displaying the most exquisite sensibility towards whatever is excellent in art, literature, and human nature, with many rich and poetical graces of composition. Mr CHARLES LAMB (1775-1835), the only remaining writer of this school, showed, in his essays under the name of Elia, a wonderful power of delineating minute shades of character, and throwing the charm of human interest over the most unpromising subjects.

The benevolent sentiment, and refined metaphysical style of this class of writers, was exemplified by another, who was altogether exempt from their faults, the Rev. Mr ARCHIBALD ALISON, an Episcopal clergyman settled in Edinburgh. Besides several volumes of sermons, characterised by an extraordinary degree of elegance, and pure and elevated feeling, Mr Alison published (1811) *An Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste*; in which he endeavoured to prove that the emotions which we experience from the contemplation of sublimity or beauty, are not produced by any physical or intrinsic quality in the objects which we contemplate, but by the recollection or conception of other objects which are associated in our imaginations with those before us, and consequently suggested by their appearance, and which are interesting or affecting on the common and familiar principle of being the natural objects of love, or of pity, or of fear or veneration, or some other common and lively sensation of the mind. This mode of accounting for our sense of beauty and sublimity is little better than a paradox; but the ingenuity of the argument, the felicity of the illustrations, and the

gracefulness of the composition, must be acknowledged by all who have read the work.

Amongst the writers who have most recently come into notice, a conspicuous place is due to THOMAS CARLYLE, author of *Sartor Resartus* (1836), *The French Revolution, a History* (1837), *Chartism, Essays, Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations*, two volumes (1845), a *Life of Frederick the Great*, and other writings, all of them marked primarily by a style quaint, and even uncouth, yet all presenting thoughts which could only proceed from a mind of extraordinary originality. Mr Carlyle has made, by his singular writings, a deep impression on the youthful mind of England: it would be deeper still, and it would extend beyond the younger and more susceptible minds, if he possessed a true philosophy to which to make reference, or could as well form a new and just system of ethics as he can show the defects of the old.

Miss MARY RUSSELL MITFORD deserves to be mentioned with unqualified respect for the delineations of English rustic life, and fine general household sketches, which she has given in a series of volumes entitled *Our Village*. In Mrs JAMESON we have had a highly-gifted and earnest writer, particularly in the department of criticism on works of art.

The class of works entitled *Encyclopædias*, suitable as they are to the tastes and necessities of an inquiring people, received much encouragement, and were greatly increased in bulk and in number, during the age under our notice. The early work of EPHRAIM CHAMBERS, originally published in 1728, in two folio volumes, was finally extended, under the care of Dr ABRAHAM REES, to forty volumes in quarto, a work of such magnificent proportions and embellishments, that no country but one so advanced as Britain in affluence, literature, and the arts, could have produced it. In 1771, a dictionary of the arts and sciences, extending to four volumes in quarto, was commenced in Edinburgh under the title of

*The Encyclopædia Britannica*; but with such humble views regarding the quality of the materials, that two hundred pounds seem to have formed the chief, if not the sole expense for writing and editing the work. A second edition, commenced in 1776, and extended to ten volumes, and a third in 1786, which amounted to eighteen volumes, were respectable compilations, and experienced a liberal share of public patronage. Since the beginning of the present century, the work has been reprinted a fourth time in twenty volumes, to which was added an extensive and valuable supplement, produced under the care of Mr MACVEY NAPIER of Edinburgh. In its later editions, under the care of Messrs Black of Edinburgh, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* must be considered one of the most perfect works of the kind in existence.

*The Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, commenced in 1808 by Dr (afterwards Sir) DAVID BREWSTER, and completed in 1830, in eighteen volumes, while devoting less than the usual space to biography and other literary matters, obtained that superior credit for the fulness and accuracy of its scientific articles which was to be expected in a work conducted by one so eminent in many departments of natural philosophy. Another work, entitled the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, was commenced in 1815, on a plan different from the rest, the articles being placed in a natural, instead of an alphabetical arrangement, and published in such portions throughout the successive volumes, as to insure that the work, at its completion, should contain the latest discoveries and improvements relative to every important subject. Besides these compilations, each of which could only be produced by a very large expenditure of money, labour, and ingenuity, many similar works of considerable merit, but upon a smaller scale, have been published for the benefit of a humbler class of inquirers. The attractiveness of such works has, however, been of late much diminished, in consequence of the greater

diffusion of books relating to particular subjects, and the establishment of so many public libraries of various kinds, particularly those in connection with parishes and mechanics' institutions.

The age has been highly distinguished by a series of scientific writers whose works, being of a popular description, may be said to enter into the circle of general literature. At the head of this class may be placed Sir JOHN HERSCHEL, whose *Discourse on Natural Philosophy* is perhaps the most perfect work of its kind ever published. Sir DAVID BREWSTER also presents a remarkable union of scientific accomplishments with the grace and spirit of a first-rate littérateur. His *Letters on Natural Magic*, *Life of Newton*, *History of Optics*, and various contributions to the *Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews*, are equally noted for literary elegance as for profound knowledge. A high place in this walk is due to Mr CHARLES BABBAGE, author of *The Economy of Machinery and Manufactures*; a *Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, &c. The latter work is a most ingenious attempt to bring mathematics into the range of sciences which afford proof of divine design in the constitution of the world, and contains, besides, many original and striking thoughts. The works on geology by Dr BUCKLAND, Sir R. I. MURCHISON, Sir CHARLES LYELL, Sir HENRY DE LA BECHE, HUGH MILLER, and Dr MANTELL; on botany and botanical pursuits by Dr LINDLEY and Mr LOUDON; and on zoology by Professor OWEN, Mr DARWIN, Mr YARRELL, Sir JOHN GRAHAM DALYELL, and Dr JOHNSTONE, are all valuable contributions to the library of modern science.

Perhaps no writer of the present day has shewn in his works a more extensive range of knowledge, united with great powers of expression, than the Rev. WILLIAM WHEWELL, master of Trinity College, Cambridge. *The History of the Inductive Sciences*, three volumes, 1837, and *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences, founded upon their History*, two volumes, 1840, are amongst the few



books of the age which realise to our minds the self-devoting zeal and lifelong application of the world's earlier students. Mr Whewell was also the author of that member of the series of Bridgewater Treatises in which astronomy and general physics were brought to the illustration of natural theology. A question of old standing among ethical writers is, whether the mind contains within itself the standard of the morality of our actions, as dictating an abstract rectitude in them; or, whether we are governed in our moral judgments by external considerations, as the bearing of actions upon utility, and the pleasure they will confer on ourselves or others. The former view has been argued with considerable success by Dr Whewell, in his *Elements of Morality* (1845), and in a more recent work, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy in England*. Another modern writer of unusually varied attainments was the late Dr JOHN MACCULLOCH, author of a work on *The Western Islands of Scotland*; a valuable geological one, presenting a classification of rocks; and a posthumous treatise, in three volumes, on the *Attributes of the Deity*.

The almost infant science of ethnography has received a powerful illustration from the industrious labours of Dr PRICHARD, whose *Inquiries into the Physical History of Man* is a book standing almost alone in our literature. It tends to show the accidental nature of the distinctions of colour and figure amongst races of men, and to establish the unity of the human species. Dr Prichard's work on the Celts is also one of considerable value, particularly for the light it throws on the history of language.

*The Architecture of the Heavens*, by Professor NICHOL, of Glasgow, deservedly attained great popularity as a beautiful exposition of the sublime observations of Sir William Herschel and others respecting the objects beyond the range of the solar system, and of the hypothesis of the nebular cosmogony. It was followed

by a volume of equally eloquent disquisition, under the title of *Contemplations on the Solar System*. The principles of natural philosophy have been illustrated with great success in the language of common life, in the *Elements of Physics*, by Dr NEIL ARNOTT.

From the host of writers of the immediate time, it is difficult to select with confidence, as the most popular or successful of authors are not always those who have the most enduring reputation. There are, nevertheless, a few of whom it is difficult to suppose that their names could ever bring discredit upon the record in which they are placed. Such is the author of a series of books of moderate compass, of which the two most remarkable are entitled *Friends in Council* (1847), and *Companions of my Solitude* (1851). These works bear some resemblance to those of the essayists of the last century, but, with equal refinement, they are more thoughtful, and bear upon a more important class of topics. The author (now known to be Mr ARTHUR HELPS) is a man conversant with state matters and their administrators, has a profound reflective knowledge of the great social questions of his time, and adds to all severer acquirements an ardent love of literature and of art.

Another remarkable writer of the time, not likely to be speedily forgotten, is Mr GEORGE BORROW, author of works entitled *The Zincali*—Gipsies of Spain—(1841), and *The Bible in Spain* (1842). As agent for the British and Foreign Bible Society in Spain, he formed an acquaintance with scenes and characters in that country such as few travellers encounter, and these he has described with a relish and unction scarcely to have been expected from one charged with so solemn a function. The effect is a style of writing singularly graphic and entertaining. In a subsequent, and less successful work, entitled *Lavengro* (1851), we have a shadowy sketch of the author's own life, showing an

eccentric and adventurous career well calculated to explain the mixed character of his other writings.

This section may be closed with an account of the cheap and popular system of publication, which has formed so remarkable a feature of the passing age.

The production of books, calculated, by their price and modes of publication, for the less affluent and more numerous portion of the community, was in some measure a natural result of the efforts which have been made, since the close of the eighteenth century, to diffuse the blessings of education, and establish institutes for the scientific instruction of mechanics. In the year 1823, several London book-sellers had commenced the publication of cheap weekly sheets, either containing portions of some standard book, or a series of miscellaneous literary articles, chiefly extracted from other works; and these sheets had, in general, been eagerly purchased. Their success seems to have suggested to Mr (now Lord) BROUGHAM, an eminent member of the House of Commons, and zealous patron of the cause of education, the publication of cheap tracts, composed with greater care, and issued with all the advantage which could be derived from the sanction of a large body of distinguished persons. This scheme he announced in a pamphlet published in January 1825, and it was realised by the institution, in April of that year, of the *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, and the commencement, in March 1827, of a series of treatises, embracing the sciences and most useful branches of history, which were published in octavo numbers at sixpence each, under the general title of *The Library of Useful Knowledge*. In the meantime Mr CONSTABLE of Edinburgh had resolved to take advantage of the growing appetite for literature and knowledge in cheap forms, and commenced, in the autumn of 1826, a *Miscellany* bearing his own name, which presented a series of books, original and selected,

and generally belonging to the classes of biography, history, and travels. *Constable's Miscellany*, the first work actually published in which original literature was made to depend for remuneration on a multitude of purchasers attracted by cheapness, attained a circulation varying between five and ten thousand, and was carried on with spirit for about five years. Of *The Library of Useful Knowledge*, favoured by the operations of an influential society, and conducted with great care and judgment, the number usually sold in the first few months was nearly twenty thousand. The Society afterwards commenced the publication of a series entitled *The Library of Entertaining Knowledge*, of which, though four times higher in price, a like number were sold. They also published a cheap atlas, or series of maps, an annual almanac, and an elegant and moderately-priced collection of portraits, with biographical memoirs.

The example of Mr Constable was meanwhile pursued with success by several London and other booksellers. *The Family Library*, in handsome volumes at five shillings, *Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia*, in six-shilling volumes, and *The Edinburgh Cabinet Library*, at the former price, may be instanced as the most successful of the works which took the Miscellany in any degree for their model. More recently, other publishers have followed in the same walk; and to bring out dear books may now be said to be rather the exception than the rule.

Although the cheap series were manifestly the means of extending the number of readers, and of introducing the light of knowledge and the amenities of polite letters into places where neither had formerly been known, a step still remained to be taken before full advantage of the cheap mode of publication could be said to have been obtained. There was commenced, in February 1832, a periodical sheet of original literature, entitled *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, in which a quantity

of matter equal to that contained in a number of the Library of Useful Knowledge was offered at a fourth of the price. The result of this extraordinary cheapness was a circulation of unprecedented magnitude. Other works of similar character have been started with more or less success ; and there can be little doubt that the weekly diffusion of such a vast mass of literature, generally instructive, and in some cases moral, must in a few years work most beneficial changes in the middle and lower departments of the community.

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\* \* For a more extended treatment of the subject of this volume, the student is referred to " CHAMBERS'S CYCLOPÆDIA OF ENGLISH LITERATURE ; consisting of a series of Specimens of British Writers in Prose and Verse, connected by a Historical and Critical Narrative." 2 vols. 8vo.

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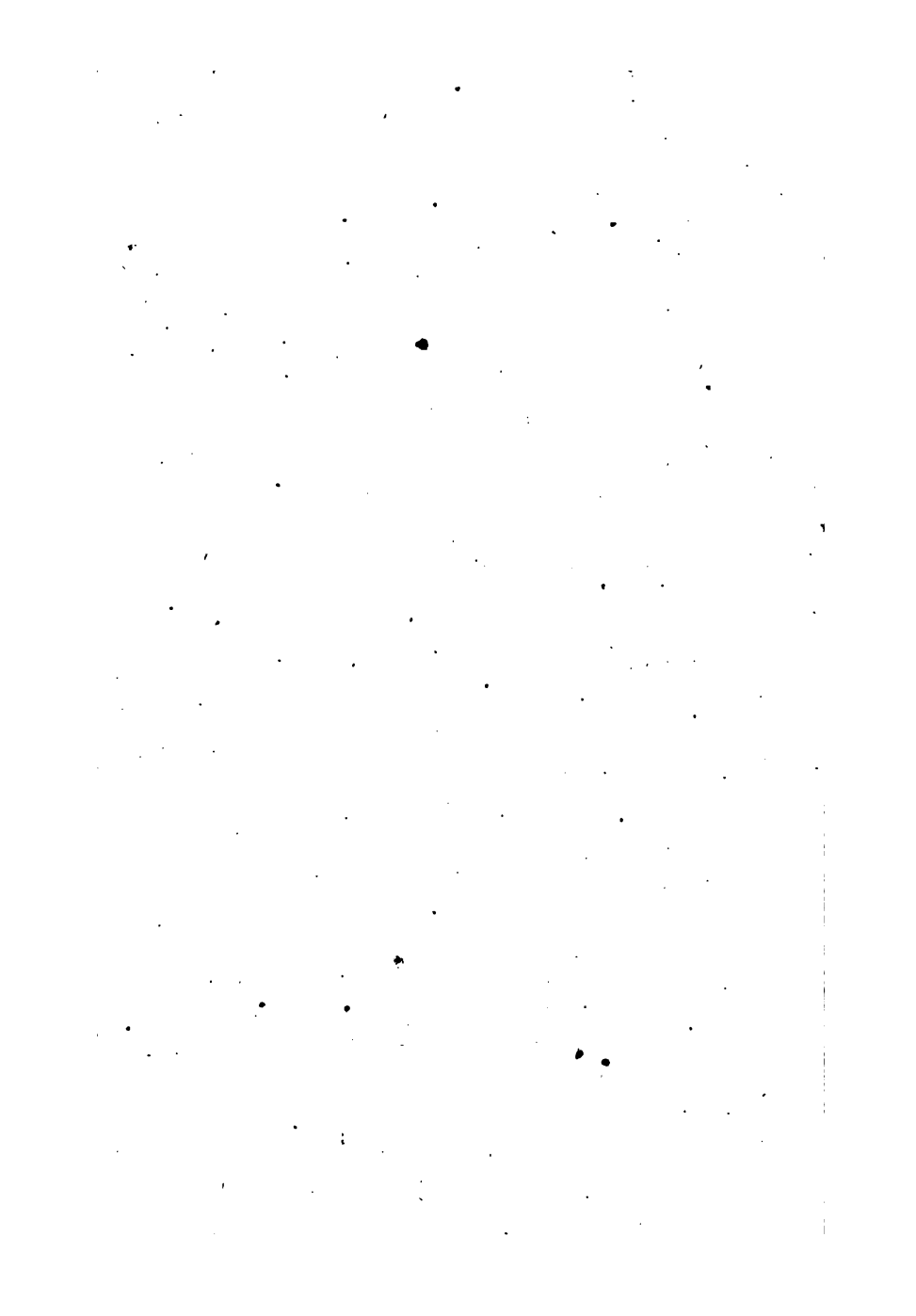
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